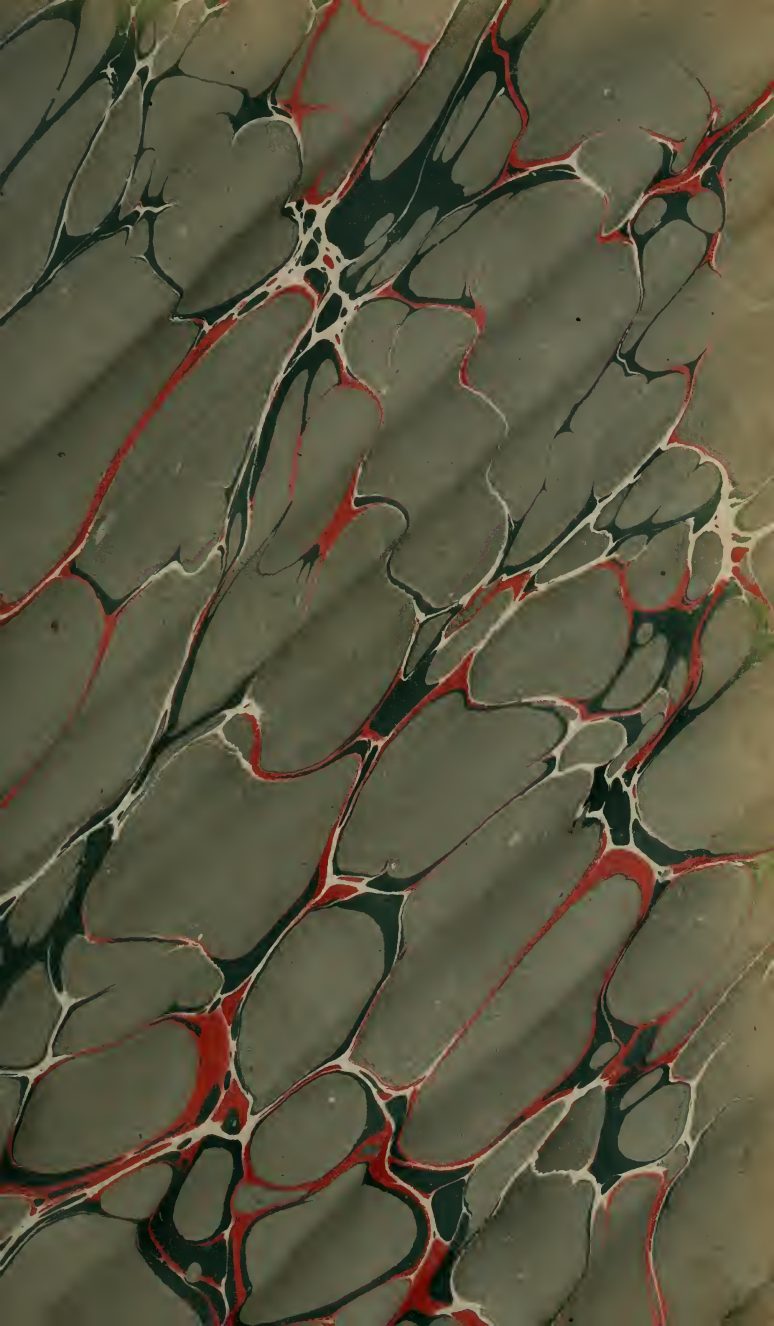
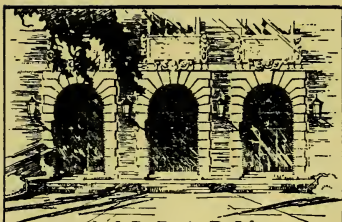






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HIGH LIFE

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROTHERS KRAMER"

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

NEW YORK

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HIGH LIFE,

A NOVEL.

"Tis from HIGH LIFE High Characters are drawn."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1827.

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HIGH LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

“ Your Author treats of love’s delights,
Of Halycon days, and joyous nights;
To the gay fancy lovely themes,
And fain I’d hope they ’re more than dreams.”

COTTON.

ACCORDING to a previous arrangement, the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville set out to pay a visit of a few days at Hermitage, the morning after the Vignoles’ departure from Abbeville. As they did not leave the latter till late, there was time for nothing

after their arrival but a re-introduction between themselves and Mrs. Balfour, before retiring to dress for dinner. The latter, who had been out driving all the morning, returning the numberless visits which had been paid her since coming to the country, was in her pelisse and bonnet when Lady Malverton entered, and presented in her appearance altogether an emblem of one accustomed to every comfort, and aware of every advantage, either natural or adventitious; less delicate in figure than Miss Mandeville, she possessed a beauty of face more calculated to be popular, for it was more characterized by health and good-humour.

As the Countess and her daughter, previous to descending to the drawing-room after dressing, were standing for a moment at the window of the room which divided their chambers, Miss Mandeville, attired in white, with a profusion of pink flowers in her hair, and a beautiful baby in her arms, entered.

“ I am come, Lady Malverton,” said she, “ to introduce to *you* one of my sister’s charming children, whom I just caught from the nurse :—this is Adelaide.”

“ The lovely creature,” exclaimed the Countess, in a tone of rapture.

“ The little angel !” ejaculated her daughter, kissing the child, who was indeed a perfect beauty, with lips and cheeks red as the coral that hung about its neck, and eyes whose lids

“ With jetty fringe
Kiss’d its soft cheek’s blooming tinge.”

“ But let us descend,” said Miss Mandeville. “ They are too much accustomed to see *me* play the part of nurse to be surprized.”

Lady Malverton and her daughter agreed ; and Madelina followed them into the drawing-room (which was now filled) with the timid, smiling air of a pretty girl who has stolen a kitten, or purloined a bird’s-nest.

“ Ah, Maddy,” said Mrs. Balfour, who in a

handsome dinner-dress of figured silk was seated on a sofa, "you have been paying a visit to the nursery, I perceive."

"No, only intercepted some of its property," returned Miss Mandeville, glancing at Lord Claver, who was leaning against the window.

"Its most beautiful property, I should say," observed his Lordship, advancing and holding out his arms to the child, "had I not seen the rest."

"Madelina is an excellent nurse," said Lady Mandeville, and the gouty feet of Lord Coralcourt, which were by her side, were before her imagination, as she spoke, "she is never so happy as when with the children."

"How *aimable*!" observed Lord Coralcourt in a low and pompous tone, to the flattered mother of Madelina—"how delightful to see a young lady, who, like your daughter, has mixed in the first circles of fashion, thus domestic!"

“ Domestic life would be indeed her element,” said Lady Mandeville, with something like a sentimental sigh ; “ and I often wish we were able to enjoy it more for her sake : but Sir William is so fond of company, and our situation in the county demands certain sacrifices of our time and fortune, and——

“ And is it possible,” interrupted his Lordship in the same *sotto voce* that he spoke before ; “ do you really think that Miss Mandeville could resign company, admirers, amusements, all that she at present enjoys, for retirement and a limited acquaintance ; if marriage, for instance,” and his Lordship laughed, “ offered her the exchange ?”

“ Could ! oh, my Lord,” said her Ladyship, with something like a smile of compassion at his doubting it, and delighted at the opening it gave her ; “ you do not know my daughter, or you would not ask such a question. Unite her to a man, whether young or old, for it is not

partiality, but justice, to say she would render equally happy the morning or evening of life. Endow her with fortune to contribute to the happiness and relief of others ; and rank, perhaps, because it would heighten the influence of her example ; and then separate her from society, dissipation, flattery,—and not one sigh would it cost her. All her happiness would be centered in her husband, her home, and the power of doing good.”

While Lady Mandeville was thus exerting her eloquence in the cause of her daughter, and investing her with perfections which she was very indifferent whether the *Countess of Coralcourt* realized or disappointed, *provided* that by possessing that title she was enabled to do the *one* or the *other*, Miss Mandeville was engaged in a flirtation with Lord Claver, who, as he tossed the little Adelaide in his arms, was complimenting her on her affection for children.

“What a heart must that woman have, my Lord, who would not delight in my sister’s?” observed she; and to display a contrast favourable as she hoped to herself, she turned to Mr. Damer, who then approached them; and with the sweetest smile in the world, expressed a fear that the introduction of the baby was more agreeable to herself than some of the other ladies in the room.

“Why, I can’t answer for the sentiments of the ladies,” said Mr. Damer, laughing; “Miss Mandeville, who is *herself* so *feminine*, can best surmise them. But of the gentlemen she seems to have made one convert, at least.”

“At the expense of one foe, then, I suspect,” returned she; “for your wife, I know, hates the sight of children, and has often prevented me bringing them into the drawing-room.”

“It is to be hoped, then,” said Mr. Damer, affecting to smile but really annoyed, “that she’ll never be troubled with having any herself.”

“Nay, Charles,” cried Madelina, in a fawning tone, “do not say that. I dare say the time *will* come, when *herself* a fond, anxious mother, she will cease to ridicule others who are so too.”

“What! isn’t it sufficient that she dislikes children herself, must she laugh that others do?” inquired Mr. Damer, quickly turning and looking at his wife, who having heard (as Madelina was aware) what had passed, sat covered with blushes, though her head was averted in a contrary direction from her husband.

Mrs. Damer had unfortunately exposed herself to the maliciousness which was now exercised against her, by having affected an indifference to Mr. Balfour’s children she was far from feeling, and which she had foolishly assumed from being disgusted with the fulsome expressions of fondness which Madelina (who really detested them) perpetually lavished upon them. But the latter was greatly mistaken in

thinking that her palpable and ungenerous communication of this could be unnoticed by, or make her appear by contrast more amiable to the man whom she wished to please. On the contrary, he saw through her design, and the *first* moment of its detection was the *last* of her appearing lovely in Lord Claver's eyes.

The sending for nurse, and announcement of dinner, put thoughts and conversation in a different channel. And Sir William Mandeville and the Countess of Malverton led the way to the dining-room.

When the ladies collected again in the latter, Mrs. Balfour was the principal talker. Anxious, perhaps, to impress Lady Malverton with more exalted ideas of her fortune and consequence than she had hitherto had an opportunity of doing, she conversed in a decided and fashionable tone, on 'the beauties of the new opera, the brilliancy of the last drawing-room, the merits of new publications, &c., &c., and

then descanted on her annoyances with regard to servants ; the fine airs of her nurses and footmen ; the insolence of her own woman : crowning all with wondering how other people *did* get on. That she fancied her children looked worse than any one's else, though she was sure there was as much if not *more* care taken of them ; that her carriages were less at her own disposal, though they had so many horses, and the men had such monstrous salaries :—
“But, I believe, every one makes the same complaints,” said Mrs. Balfour, laughing at herself.

“Every one, be assured, Adelaide,” observed her mother, “who has such an establishment as yours ;” when they were interrupted by the entrance of the children and coffee.

The little Balfours were individually beautiful children ; but in a group, the boys dressed in their plaids, the girls in muslin robes and coloured sashes, they formed indeed a per-

fect picture. And as they were all playing about together on the carpet, Lady Malverton saw completely realized the loveliness which the Count de Meurville had described them possessing.

As dinner had been that day about six o'clock, they were joined by some of the gentlemen at a little past eight, who, with all the ladies, except Mrs. Damer and Agnes, went out to walk. Of the two latter, one was prevented by a violent cold, the other by a painful continuance of her sprained ancle. And when the Count de Meurville entered the drawing-room (which he did a few minutes after the party had gone out,) he found them both at chess. Preferring a seat by the side of Agnes to taking a walk which she could not enjoy, he sat down there with a book in his hand, and supposing her interested in her game, did not disturb her by conversation, unaware that from the moment his arm was thrown round

the back of her chair, all her thoughts were in confusion; and pawns, rooks, and bishops, became of equal importance. Afraid of Mrs. Damer, who had frequently corrected her moves in silence, at last proclaiming her inattention aloud, Agnes broke silence by inquiring of her cousin what he was reading.

“ Oh, a very dry work !” returned the Count de Meurville, “ one Yalbroke has insisted on my reading, and which seems calculated to induce a man to hang himself. The writer would persuade you there is nothing like happiness or gratitude in the world; and that a state of apathetic indifference to every thing is most philosophic; and several other agreeable ideas.”

“ Positively you shall not read it then,” said Agnes, laying her hand over the book with the gentle authority of love; “ for I don’t wish *my cousin*, and she looked at Mrs. Damer, to resemble Lord Yalbroke, who must have picked

up all his odd ideas from that and similar works."

"You needn't be afraid, Agnes," returned he, pressing her hand as he removed it from before him; "it only convinces me of what I never doubted,—that I am a man, and no *philosopher*."

"And long may you remain so," said she; "but Caroline, you are going. Have I exhausted your patience by my inattention?"

"Oh no," returned Mrs. Damer; "but if the Count de Meurville will take my place for a minute or two, I must step for an orange to assuage my thirst."

"I can, certainly," said the Count de Meurville; "but," he added, as she shut the door, "I'd rather talk to my own Agnes."

"Oh, play *something*!" returned the latter, moving two of her own pieces in quick succession: "or she'll *suspect*—" Agnes added; when checking herself she rose, and went to—

wards an open window, which looked out into the shrubbery.

“What will she suspect?” said De Meurville, following her, and throwing his arm about her waist.

“I don’t know, I can’t tell,” cried Agnes, only anxious to hide her face from the searching, the eloquent expression of his.

“Shall I tell you?” whispered her lover, as they leant out of the window.

“No; or you’ll make me repent not having followed her.”

“Well! then, you must comply with the request I am going to make of you,” said he; “though I own it is not my very first—nor I hope,” he presently added, “will it be my very last.”

“What is it?” inquired she.

“It is to be given a lock of this sweet hair, Agnes.”

“Trifling as is the request, it is one impru-

dent to be granted," said she ; " and yet—" she hesitated.

" And yet you will not—*cannot* refuse me," cried De Meurville, snatching up a pair of scissors from a table near, and drawing a comb from the luxuriant tresses he so much admired.

" Well, make haste," said Agnes, trembling, as he was deliberating from where the prize might be taken with least detriment ; " for Caroline will return."

And Caroline's step was heard approaching as Agnes's hair still floated in wild confusion on her shoulders : " Goodness, De Meurville !" she exclaimed, hastily adjusting it and resuming her seat at the chess-table, while he continued at the window laughing at her agitation, and folding in a letter the hair she had given him.

" We have made great progress, Caroline," said Agnes, trying to rally herself when Mrs. Damer entered.

“Well! I suppose the game is finished,” cried the latter, “by my seeing the Count de Meurville over there.”

“No, indeed,” said he, turning round with a suppressed smile; “I found I was making no hand of it, and left it for you to continue.”

“You did not do much mischief either,” returned Mrs. Damer, reviewing her game and preparing to continue it; when Madame came into the room to make tea, and the gentlemen who had not gone out sallied from the dining-parlour, so that it was by mutual consent put aside.

“Why, where are all the company gone?” inquired Lord Coralcourt and Mr. Fraser, as they entered.

“All gone to walk except us, my Lord,” returned the Count de Meurville.

“And why are you not of the party, and Mrs. Damer, and Miss *Annette*?” added he, looking at the ladies.

The unfortunate name attributed to her by mistake, caused Agnes to steal a glance at De Meurville, over whose brow clouds in a moment passed.

“Ah, Agnes !” said his Lordship, laughing, as Mrs. Damer corrected his mistake of names in answering him. “I was thinking of a young lady of my acquaintance, who greatly resembles Miss Mandeville here, when I called her Annette. She is very pretty too,” continued his Lordship, “but not perhaps quite so pretty as you, Miss Agnes.”

“I dare say I should be very proud to be mistaken for her if I knew her,” returned Agnes, blushing.

And they were now interrupted by the entrance of those who had been walking.

“We have taken a most delightful walk,” cried the Countess of Malverton and Lady Mandeville. “You and Agnes have had a great loss,” continued the latter, looking at Mrs.

Damer, "in not having been able to accompany us."

"Oh, any one has had a loss," cried Miss Mandeville, "who did not go out this evening. It was a most charming one!" added she, affectedly sitting down and throwing back her shawl and bonnet.

"Well, where did you all go?" inquired Mr. Fraser, in a plain blunt manner.

"Why, we divided our forces," returned Miss Mandeville: "Mrs. Fraser and Miss Beckford, and Mamma and Charlotte, only walked about the grounds; but the Countess, Lady Georgiana, Adelaide, and myself, went down the road and pulled honey-suckles, dog-roses, &c., and looked into the cottages, and talked to the old women, and kissed the pretty children, while the gentlemen flirted with the girls, and drank their milk, and threw about the hay, and ruralized it completely!"

"Ah, I was going to ask after your squires,"

said Lord Coralcourt, "as you did not mention the division attached to each party?"

"Why, upon comparing notes," said Charlotte, "as we walked up the terrace, we found each of our division of squires had conducted themselves so similarly bad, as equally to deserve being excluded from notice."

"Upon my word you are very severe on us, Miss Charlotte," cried Mr. Landskay: "for my own part, my only crimes were not sufficiently appreciating the beauty of a sky you pointed out to me, and pulling to pieces a flower you had gathered, and treading by accident on Flora's toes, and——"

"Oh, spare us the catalogue of your crimes," cried Lord Claver, "they seem most heinous, and there's no father confessor in company to absolve you."

"If *his* are heinous, what are your's, my Lord?" inquired Miss Mandeville; "who tore my beautiful sprigged muslin with a nasty

bramble-bush you picked up, and got us all into a lane we were near not being able to find our way out of again."

"Yes," said Mrs. Balfour, "and made the country people laugh at our awkwardness in getting over the stiles."

"Not forgetting," interrupted the Countess, with a significant shake of her head, "that his Lordship drew on us all manner of abuse, by persisting in our wading through an old man's corn-field."

"Ah, hang that old man!" said Lord Claver, "his voice still vibrates through my ears. I was determined on going through his field, for the sake of opposition."

"By way of making yourself popular in the county, I presume," returned Lady Mandeville, drily.

"Just so," answered his Lordship, in the same tone. But really, Miss Mandeville," he added, in the playful voice he had spoken be-

fore ; “ it’s too bad to make *me* the only delinquent called to account, when those gentlemen over there must plead guilty to the same offence.”

“ Well, if you can get them to stand their trial,” said Lady Malverton, “ I’ll be their judge ; and those three ladies, (looking at Mrs. Balfour, Miss Mandeville, and her daughter,) their jury.”

“ Heaven defend me from such a judge and such a jury !” said Sidney Mandeville, laughing ; “ that’s a court in which, indeed, I should expect no mercy.”

“ No ; because it would be a court of justice,” observed Mrs. Balfour.

“ Rather say a court of caprice, Adelaide,” rejoined her brother.

In remark and repartee, thus trifling and good-humoured, did tea-time pass away ; after which a couple of card-tables were formed for some of the party, and the rest gathered them-

selves indiscriminately around a large table, at which a few of the ladies produced light work; and the remainder, with the gentlemen, amused themselves in looking over port-folios of drawings and prints, or inventing and unravelling puzzles, charades, &c., till the supper-trays were brought in.

CHAPTER II.

“ And when she glides through the dance, (and in touching with easy and accustomed grace the hands of many, she feels there is but one hand whose touch she can recognize ; and waiting for its thrilling and lifelike vibration, moves on like a statue, cold and graceful, till the pygmalion-touch warms her into woman.”

MELMOTH.

As the party at Hermitage (assembled in a morning-room) were after breakfast arranging different plans for the disposal of the day, they were somewhat surprized by the sudden entrance of Lord Yalbroke, who had been stopping for a few weeks past on a visit in the neighbourhood.

“ I am come,” cried his Lordship, after paying his respects to the company, “ to endeavour

to induce some of you to perform a charitable action."

"I hope," said Lady Mandeville, "no great inducement is requisite to prevail on us all to do that."

"Well then, without farther preamble," said his Lordship, "will you make up a party from here to go to the theatre this evening?"

"To the theatre!" repeated every one.

"Yes: not to a London theatre, certainly, but to a theatre established by some poor strolling players, in the town of ———, who are in great distress, and for whom, from what I have heard, I am a good deal interested."

The whole party smiled, knowing Lord Yalbroke's enthusiastic passion for theatricals, and begged farther explanation.

"Why, I am in a hurry now," returned his Lordship, in his usual wild, unsatisfactory manner; "but I'll dine here, if Lady Mandeville has no objection, and tell you more about

it. In the meantime, do make up your minds to go. The Shelbournes have promised ; and I shall try and secure some of the military.—Farewell.” “The play,” added he, coming back, “is to be the Belle’s Stratagem.”

“I hope this is not a Beau’s Stratagem,” observed Mr. Fraser, as his Lordship left the room.

“Beau’s or Belle’s,” said Lady Mandeville, “I shall not go to catch my death of cold.”

“Nor *I* neither, I suspect,” returned Lady Malverton.

“Well, I shall,” said Charlotte, independently ; “if any one will accompany me.”

“Oh, I’ll join you,” cried Lord Claver ; “it’s just the sort of thing I delight in.”

“Ah, but I would not trust myself with you. Will you go, Mrs. Fraser ?”

“If I am wanted as a chaperon,” replied the Lady ; “but here returns Mr. Sidney.”

“Well !” said Lady Mandeville, “has Lord

Yalbroke enlightened you on the subject of this charity, as he calls it?"

"No: I can only make out that the manager broke his leg some time ago; and that he has a wife and a dozen children; and the whole troop were robbed lately. And—and in short he wants us to patronize them."

"I suspect," said Lady Clermont, "there's some pretty girl, whom he's madly in love with, at bottom of it all."

"I'd have no objection to go," cried Miss Mandeville, languidly, "if I thought the play would be so intolerably performed as to afford one a good laugh; but to go to a country play decently acted, is one of the miseries of human life."

"Well," said Lady Mandeville, "we'll see what Lord Yalbroke has to say more on the subject by-and-bye; and if there seems any thing tempting in the prospect, some of you can go. But, in the meantime, what shall we do with ourselves? It is just one."

“Whatever we like, if it depends on the weather,” observed Sidney, looking out.

“I have several visits to pay,” continued Lady Mandeville; “so that if the Countess has no objection—”

“I have no objection to any thing,” interrupted her Ladyship.

“Well, then,” said Lady Mandeville; “we’ll order the barouche at once, and some of us prepare to go out visiting.”

This arrangement was agreed to, and the Countess, Lady Mandeville, and Mrs. Balfour, went immediately to put on their things, while the rest of the party disposed of themselves in different ways. Some assembled in the cottage, where the ladies took their work and the gentlemen read or drew; others went to walk or ride, and a few remained in the library or billiard-room, to read, write, or play.

According to promise, Lord Yalbroke made his appearance at dinner-time, and gave such

further accounts of the distress, and yet goodness, of the performers, as to induce some of the young people to prepare after dinner, for going to the theatre. While waiting for the carriages, the party to go assembled in the drawing-room, talking, and laughing, and forming the frivolous suppositions and fears that are usual on such occasions.

“I am sure,” cried Miss Mandeville, suddenly, “that we have several copies of the Belle’s Stratagem somewhere in the library, for I know, about two or three years ago, we had an intention of acting it here.” Do, Arabella, go and see.”

Arabella went, and returned in a little time with two copies, which was all she could discover.

“I hope,” said Agnes, carelessly taking up one, “there will be a pretty girl to play Letitia Hardy; she has so many pretty speeches to make. Here, for instance, when Doricourt in-

quires what she'd be if married to the man she loved, and who was worthy of her love? She's to reply, 'I'd be *all* and *anything*, the soul of whim, the spirit of variety. Live with him in the eye of fashion, or in the shades of retirement. Change my country, my sex; feast with him in an Esquimaux hut or a Persian pavilion. Join him in the victorious war-dance on the borders of Lake Ontario, or sleep to the soft breathings of the lute in the cinnamon groves of Ceylon. Dig with him in the mines of Golconda,' &c."

" 'Delightful wildness!' " cried Lord Yalroke, personifying Doricourt, and holding out his arms to her; " 'Oh, to catch thee for ever, and hold thee in this little cage!' "

Encouraged by the admiration she read in the eyes of those around, and forgetting, for the first time, to regard those of De Meurville, who was leaning against the mantel-piece at some little distance, Agnes, with the thought-

lessness and almost natural vanity of a young and lovely girl, continued with Lord Yalbroke to recite speeches from different plays, personifying the characters who spoke them as she did so; when suddenly a glance at the Count betrayed such mingled displeasure and disdain depicted in his countenance, at what he probably conceived her levity and affectation, as in a moment put to flight her theatrical powers, and Rosalind, Juliet, and Ophelia, were all forgotten in the fear of having offended him, without whose concurrence no praise could be delightful, nor no plaudits please. With her colour gone, her eyes starting tears, Agnes stood equally unable to proceed, and irritated at the look of calm superiority with which, master of her feelings, and, as she fancied, despising their versatility, De Meurville stood regarding her.

Fortunately, it was not a moment in which either his observation or her embarrassment,

was perceptible; and when she broke off her acting with a sudden exclamation of being able to recollect nothing more, no notice was taken of it, but some one else began to perform and recite with easy freedom. Presently the carriages were announced, and De Meurville, who before had intended to be of the party to the theatre, now voted himself off the expedition; and with assumed carelessness, but evident determination, resisted the entreaties of every one but Agnes to come along with them. The latter saw in a moment, that he was displeased; and determined to prove it to her, by abstaining from a place where he knew she, his general attraction, was yet to be. At first she hesitated whether to affect to notice it or not; but as they were all leaving the room, except the Count, she could not resist the temptation of lingering for a little, to inquire what had induced him to change his resolution of accompanying them. De Meurville, who had thrown himself carelessly

along a sofa, as they were as he thought all departing, started up on perceiving Agnes returning and approaching him, and by the light of the fire she could perceive something like a smile—though of dubious import—play about his mouth. “Why won’t you come, Clifford?” said she, appearing at the same time half-ashamed of asking him the question.

“Oh, I don’t know—I am not inclined,” returned he; but looking as if a very different motive prompted him.

“The fact is,” interrupted she, “only you don’t wish to offend me by saying so, that you have had acting enough for one evening.”

“Perhaps I have,” sighed De Meurville; “but I do not know, Agnes, that I should be altogether restrained by fear of offending you, from telling you so; for you might interpret my aversion to seeing you in any character than your own, into my considering the latter so perfect.”

“ Yes, if I were very vain I certainly might,” said Agnes ; “ but to tell you the truth, it would require my being so to draw such an inference from either your looks or words.”

“ Would it ?” said De Meurville, the displeasure her observation occasioned evidently only mitigated by its being from her it came ; “ then tell me what was their import, Agnes ?”

“ Oh, it is of no consequence !” said she quickly ; and would have left him : for she thought when she had made something like an overture to conciliate him, he need not have urged her to so mortifying an avowal, but still he detained her.

“ Are you displeased with me, Agnes,” said he, “ for asserting a power with which you first invested me ?”

“ Not if there had been any necessity for so doing,” said she.

“ Of that,” said De Meurville, “ you should conceive me a judge, or never have appointed

me a guide ; but you gave me one standard, by which ever to regulate your conduct,—by what I should deem correct in my sister's."

"I could not have known," said Agnes, "when I did so, how very exalted one it was; or I should have despaired of conforming to it."

De Meurville half-smiled; but perceiving tears in her eyes, took her hand, and would have drawn her towards him, but she withdrew it: and the party outside, who had been hitherto detained talking to the gentlemen coming from the dining-room, appearing now on the point of departure, she left him without one word, for which in vain he pleaded, or one look, which it is probable he might have valued more.

The performers were wretched, but consequently greater novelties to the Mandeville party: and unrestrained by that feeling,—for the most part at least,—which might have pre-

vented some from deriving amusement from the mortification of others, as abounding in that selfishness which taught them to seek for gratification, from whatever source,—they continued while at the theatre, to laugh and amuse themselves, and upon their return to criticise and decry, in all the happy security and aristocratic pride of those whom nature and fortune had for ever exempted, apparently, from the possibility of being exposed to similar criticisms.

At dinner the next day, the ladies were all streaming with blue ribbons, in honour of Lord Clavers, who had been elected in the morning ; and in the evening there was a ball, to which the families around had been previously invited. It was opened by Mr. Mandeville and Lady Elizabeth Delaval, sister of the Marquess of Ellendale.

Agnes, who had had no communication with De Meurville since the evening before, either by

looks or words—for he had rode to London early in the morning and not returned till a short time before the arrivals for the evening commenced—now watched anxiously to see whether he would, as usual, take an early opportunity of soliciting her hand: but the first quadrille commenced, and he danced with Lady Georgiana Granville; the second, and he engaged himself to Miss Torrens; the third, and Agnes was almost in despair: but, as if interpreting the glance, which for a moment met his own, De Meurville did not join in it; but throwing himself on a seat, continued half conversing and half regarding her, in a manner that occasioned in Agnes, who was dancing with Lord Clavers, a timidity and embarrassment, the most lovely to behold, the most painful to feel, the most gratifying, it would seem, to man to inspire, that can well be imagined. She knew so well his horror of any thing like levity, and suspicion of it even in the most

trifling freedom, that she literally shrank from every touch, and avoided every whisper, thereby incurring the imputation of affectation from all but him, for whose sake this appearance was incurred. At last, chance so occasioned it that De Meurville took, for a few minutes, the place of the gentleman who had been dancing opposite to her, and then indeed this confusion was no longer visible, or had changed its character ; for the looks which occasioned it wore smiles, and the eyes which created it beamed love.

“Do look,” said a young lady who was not dancing, to one near her, “at Miss Mandeville! Did you ever see any one whose appearance has so changed within these few minutes ; she was looking so pale and languid, and is now so animated and sprightly !”

“Oh, I ’m admiring her affectation, I assure you !” returned the other ; “but that is Miss Agnes Mandeville, if you mean the young lady in white, with blue flowers in her hair.”

“I mean she who is now giving her hand to the Count de Meurville.”

“Well, that is Miss Agnes Mandeville, and if report speaks true, she’d be happy to give him that hand for life.”

“How beautiful she is!” involuntarily exclaimed her companion, “one would think the man she loved must worship her.”

“Beautiful! Oh no!” returned the other; “even the men don’t contend for that; if you talk of beauty, talk of Lady Georgiana Granville!”

Miss Matthorpe glanced for a moment at the latter, who was blazing by the side of the Marquess of Ellendale, more brilliant than his orders—“Yes, she is a splendid creature indeed,” said she; “but she looks so proudly conscious of it, as if she almost scorned your admiration, and were in fact too exalted to be loved. But Miss Mandeville looks so sweet and humble, as

if she were rather coveting your forbearance than conscious of commanding your love."

Miss Benfoyle shook her head significantly. "She may look so, my dear," returned she, "but depend upon it, Miss Mandeville thinks just as much of herself as Lady Georgiana Granville. Why all that hair which falls about in such affected negligence, is studiously arranged after the pictures of King Charles's beauties. Did you ever hear any thing so absurd?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal more; but stay, the quadrille is just over, and Lord Clavers will be seating her; let us make room here that I may have a closer view of her." His Lordship did not, however, avail himself of the seat proposed, but placed his fair partner by the side of Mrs. Boswell, with whom and Agnes he continued in conversation till it was time, he said, to set out in quest of another partner for the ensuing dances. He had not been long gone before the Count de Meurville came over to them.

“I am completing all you men have left undone,” exclaimed Mrs. Boswell to him as he approached; “to make Miss Mandeville vain, by telling her all the fine things that are said of her this evening. I assure you her eyes are doing more mischief than Lady Georgiana Granville’s.”

The Count de Meurville smiled, and glanced at Agnes, who was re-arranging some flowers that had fallen from her bosom. “I suspect,” said he, “that Miss Mandeville has not *now* to learn that power.”

“If they were black,” continued this lively lady, “I should say as they do of those of the Spanish ladies, that they were in mourning for the murders they had committed; but they are my own favourite hue, the beautiful, pensive, purple-blue of starry night!”

“Positively, Mrs. Boswell,” said Agnes, “I must run away from you, or you will not leave me one grain of common sense remaining.”

“ Oh ! run off, Miss Mandeville as fast as you please,” returned the other, with one of her own peculiar laughs ; “ only take care to take some one along with you : there ’s the Count de Meurville, who ’ll be most happy, I day say, to enter on any fate he may have the honour to share with you.”

Agnes blushed, but Mrs. Boswell did not seem to perceive it, and went on—“ Seriously speaking,” said she, “ running off is the pleasantest thing in the world. I ran off with Boswell, and though he was not the man of my choice, but a kind of intermediate between one I hated and one I loved,—ah ! I ’ll not add to the vanity of your sex, Count Meurville, by telling you how much,—it was the pleasantest thing in the world. I was so wondered at and scolded at, and courted and beloved, that whether I were woman or angel I for some time after scarcely knew.”

“ This is very pretty encouragement you are

holding out, Mrs. Boswell," said Agnes; "I do not know what Mamma would say to my being auditor to it."

Mrs. Boswell fixed her eyes upon her, and the smile which lurked about her lips seemed to intimate her vainly endeavouring to repress some observation that would rise to them. "I am very much mistaken, Miss Mandeville," said she at length, "if I shall not one day have to call you a convert to it."

"Oh, don't make any such sad prophecy of me," said Agnes, "for fear, as is sometimes the case, it should realize itself."

"Well, I won't if it displeases you," said the lady, laughing; "but," and she shook her sagacious little head, "I have been always accounted a prophetess, and we shall see, that's all."

"That you are for once a false one, I hope," said Agnes, and stole rather than cast a glance,

at De Meurville, as if in expectation he would confirm the hope.

But the Count was, or appeared to be, engaged in disentangling his watch-chains, and the half-indulged, half-repressed smile which hovered about his lips, caused a deeper blush on Agnes's cheeks than all Mrs. Boswell's rail-lery was able to excite.

"Are you cruel enough, De Meurville," said she, looking up at him, "to unite in such sad prognostications?"

"Ah! I'll leave him to tell you, my dear," cried Mrs. Boswell, starting up and seizing the arm of a young lady near her, of whom she was the chaperon, "and if I mistake not," she continued, looking back and laughing, "he'll do so, with not only the power, but the desire to realize them."

Agnes never felt so confused: had she been on perfectly good terms with De Meurville,

she would have felt embarrassed, and endeavoured to laugh off the subject; but as it was, there was a half seriousness on his part, and of course a restraint on hers, that rendered it uncommonly awkward. De Meurville did not however appear to participate in this confusion, he looked at her as if to fathom the feelings which were uppermost in her heart. "I cannot conceive," at length she exclaimed, a little impatiently, and not wholly without intention of giving him a slight reproof, "what there is in my appearance and manner to excite the fears of all my friends for my future welfare."

"Only what there is, in that of most attractive women, Agnes," said he.

"And yet," continued she, "without stopping to refute your compliment, how does it happen then that, such and such a person," naming several, "are not objects of equal anxiety?"

"Perhaps they are," returned De Meurville.

“No ; I know they are not,” said she, “and there’s Lady Georgiana Granville, who, if any human creature could justify anxiety, would certainly do so; for, beautiful beyond imagination, she is as unguarded in her manner, and as unreserved in her conversation, as any who have no reason for being otherwise; and yet Lady Malverton never seems disturbed by apprehensions respecting her.”

“I must, in the first place, remind you,” said De Meurville, “that our not foreseeing dangers, will not avert them; and, in the second, observe that I do not conceive the manner you ascribe to Lady Georgiana, and which I believe she possesses, altogether the most dangerous.”

“I wish I knew which was the least,” said Agnes with a sigh, and casting up her bright eyes as she spoke.

“That in which nothing is implied but what is spoken; or expressed, but what is easy to be understood.”

"I once," said she, "conceived that manner mine."

"If it had been," returned he in a lower tone than he had hitherto spoken, "I feel it would never have found its way to my heart."

"And yet you are displeased," said she, "with what you tell me is most attractive to you."

"Only when it is directed to others am I," returned he.

Agnes would have told him that an exclusive manner would argue an exclusive preference, which every thing forbade her from avowing; but she did not know exactly how to intimate it, and was silent.

"I came to ask you to dance," said he, "but I see the quadrille is making up, and fear I am not left time enough to plead."

"You reckoned then," said she, half smiling, "on its requiring some exertion of eloquence?"

He did not immediately reply, but a look

more expressive than words, betrayed to her he did. "Have I any chance," at length he whispered.

She shook her head, and sighing rather than pronouncing a negative, he again urged her, "or to tell him the reason of her refusal."

"Oh, I don't know! I am not inclined," said she, "as you told me yesterday evening."

De Meurville's eyes met hers as she spoke, and whether she read there what entitled him to forgiveness, or rendered resentment impossible, the hand he took was no longer denied him, but given with the hope, as well as perhaps the presentiment, that it would one day be his own for ever.

The ball was concluded with an elegant supper, and created, as often happens, diversity of opinions with regard to its agreeability. To the beautiful and admired—to those who had danced with their lovers, and been envied by their rivals—every thing of course was delight-

ful and agreeable ; but to the plain, unnoticed, and uninterested, all had appeared folly, pride, and pretension. Lady Mandeville insufferably high, and her daughters in the style of their attire, and expensiveness of its materials, outraging delicacy, while they out-dressed nobility.

CHAPTER III.

“ Go where we will, this hand in mine,
Those eyes before me smiling thus ;
Through good and ill, through storm and shine,
The world 's a world of love for us.”

MOORE.

From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

I am extremely displeased at the saucy imputation contained in your last epistle. How dare you fancy me so dissipated as to throw aside your letters unread ! and declare you can only imagine me now, dressed in the extremity of fashion, at a nine o'clock dinner, with De Meurville by my side ; or dancing quadrilles

at day-break ? I assure you, you are greatly mistaken in your suppositions :—we dine for the most part at the moderate hour of six ; and my dancing never extends till morning's dawn. The latter is, indeed, usually put an end to at an earlier hour than I could desire, as far as regards myself ; for my mother is so uneasy about my getting too thin, and De Meurville (though he dare not confess it to any one but me) equally so, that professedly to oblige her, and secretly to please him also, I sit down after twelve o'clock to look on at an amusement I am dying to continue. Apropos to De Meurville ; you must know I had the other evening an adventure with him, which has made me ashamed to look at him ever since. We had all, as I thought, retired to our apartments, and I, instead of undressing, had sat over my fire reading, till past one ; when, wishing for the second volume of the work in which I was engaged, I determined on descending for it.

Guided by the light of the moon, which gleamed through the windows and lit up the passages, I flew down without a candle, and like a thoughtless girl ran into the midst of the library, before I perceived another light than that of the moon illumined—another figure than my own occupied it. Swifter a thousand times than I entered, was I about to return, when De Meurville sprang forward and caught me in his arms. Confused, not only from the lateness of the hour, but that the having had a slight coldness with him for some days before gave this meeting the appearance of being a premeditated one for reconciliation, I did not immediately speak; and he construing it into a continued expression of displeasure, asked me, “How much longer he was to be excluded from my favour?”

“Oh, only so long as it is a matter of indifference to you,” said I; and I am afraid rather saucily, for he appeared displeased, and asked me “What I meant?”

“ Only so long,” said I, endeavouring to make myself more intelligible, “ as my society is not a matter of sufficient consequence to you, to make you appear sorry for its loss, or solicitous for its recovery.”

“ You do not know me, Agnes,” said he, “ long as we have been acquainted ; if you think that even to regain your regard I would condescend to excite your compassion !”

“ Nor can you suppose I would desire it,” said I ; “ but if you are too proud, either to appear concerned by its absence or desirous for its restoration, I must own to you, you would do well not to value it : for I have too much of the woman in my composition not to expect to be courted, before I am conquered ; to be wooed, before I am won.”

“ And am I not courting you ?” said he, endeavouring to meet my eyes as he spoke ; “ am I not imploring for a restoration of your regard ? Ah, Agnes !” he presently continued,

“ I sometimes fear it is with you, as the song you were singing a little while since expresses it :—

“ Love dwells in every outward part,
But, ah ! it never reached thine heart.”

Involuntarily I looked at him ; for that he could make such a supposition indeed surprised me ; and whether he interpreted my glance into a reproach at his doing so, or what, I know not ; it was returned by one from him which could not but make me forget all past indifference, and in a moment we were again the best of friends.

“ I was sitting up here to write a letter,” said he presently ; “ the library is to me the most inspiring place.”

“ Your theme, then,” observed I, “ was not in itself all powerful.”

“ And yet it was,” said he ; “ for I was writing of the woman I love.”

“ Oh, well ! let me not any longer disturb

you," said I; "I am afraid, as it is, I have occasioned the remainder of the portrait being less favourable than the commencement."

"No; you have only added new embellishments," said he, "by reminding me of new beauties; and the conclusion of my picture will not be inferior to the beginning, however unworthy both may be of the original."

"Well, hand me 'Dunallan,'" said I; "and do not tell your friend of a young lady who came to visit you at midnight; for I am sure he would not in her recognize," and I hesitated,— "any one who was dear to you!"—at length I said, extending my hand to his.

De Meurville caught it, and when he would have resigned it I know not; but dreadfully afraid of being detected down at such an hour, I snatched it from him, and telling him, "if I could not trust it with him for a moment, he never could expect it for life," ran away.

We have had the Countess of Malverton and Lady Georgiana Granville stopping here this last week. I believe you are acquainted with both by name; the former is an elegant and agreeable woman; the latter so beautiful as to throw every thing within the influence of her attraction into the shade: with eyes and hair of a luxuriant auburn colour, and a complexion to whose dazzling brilliancy comparing the snow and the carnation is no exaggerated metaphor. We have of course done every thing to render their visit agreeable; and the fineness of the weather and sociability of the company happening to be stopping here, have favoured our design; but had it been otherwise, had the former been unpleasant and the latter uninteresting, there is so much of mind in Lady Malverton and her daughter, as would render them independent of either circumstance; and enable them to enjoy a domes-

tic circle in the library, with books and work, as well as they could adorn a more brilliant one in the drawing-room, or a gayer party out.

Since commencing this, a most delightful plan has been resolved on for final execution. Mr. and Mrs. Damer, who have long had a little tour in contemplation, have been determined, by De Meurville's expressing his intention to travel in Scotland and Ireland during the autumn, to make that their route also ; and with him, to look at the places rendered interesting by the pen of the Scotch Novelist, whose works will be read with redoubled pleasure amidst the very scenes that gave them birth. In Ireland, which they propose crossing to by Port Patrick, they first visit the Giant's Causeway, then the Lakes of Killarney, and Dublin; from which latter they cross to London.

“ All very well,” you *will* (and may well say), “ but what is there in it so delightful to Agnes, since it will deprive her of De Meur-

ville?" Nothing delightful, indeed, if it did. But no, Caroline has insisted on my accompanying her, and we all leave here the beginning of next week. I forgot to tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Vigers third daughter, Mrs. Arlington, with her husband and family, which consists of a son and daughter, are settled in the neighbourhood of the Giant's Causeway, and to them we are to have a letter of introduction. From what I have heard of this lady, I imagine she was the beauty of the three Miss Vigers's, but made a marriage inferior to her sisters, though respectable, when she married Captain (now Colonel) Arlington. Indeed, Lady Malverton hinted as much when she was one day speaking of her sister to me: "Emily," said she, "threw herself away; I hope, Agnes, you'll never do any thing so silly: or in haste to become a bride, forget that you also entail being a wife."

Smiling, I declared "I never should." And

De Meurville, who was standing by, pronounced it a pity "that lovers should ever be married."

"Yes," said the Countess, laughing, "for the credit of man, 'twould be well they never were. With them, frequently the fondness of the lover ends with the name; and the wife is introduced to tempers which the mistress never knew."

"And is not the husband sometimes similarly enlightened, Lady Malverton?" asked De Meurville: "does not he sometimes discover faults of temper, which as a lover he never guessed at?"

"Sometimes," said Lady Malverton; "but for the most part man's indifference first elicits woman's foibles: with possession of his object ends his excitement to please it; and when that object brings with it (as a wife must) trouble, anxiety, expense, he too soon begins to prefer every other to it."

"Ah, no! Lady Malverton," cried De Meur-

ville feelingly; “every trouble she occasions him must be an additional endearment, as proving her dependence upon him; every anxiety more than repaid by her love, and every expense but the due of a creature who has bestowed on him a happiness beyond all price!”

“You talk like a lover,” said her Ladyship, smiling.

“I speak as I feel,” returned Clifford; “were the woman I loved suffering through poverty, I would beg with her if I could not relieve her; through injustice I would defend her; from unkindness I would protect her; and if the world forsook her, I would be to her the world!”

“To the Count de Meurville’s wife then,” remarked Lady Malverton, “that blessing would ever be dearest, for which she was most dependant on *him*!”

De Meurville raised his eyes of “dewy light” on me; and I was thinking how his romantic sentiments would please my Catharine: by the

bye, you are not unknown to him by character. At present he loves you for my sake, but when he is acquainted with you, he will do it for your own. I have sometimes read him parts of your letters to me, (do not be afraid—he is a very lenient judge) and he conceives you, from them, all that is amiable and lovely and good—all, as I tell him, that you are. Farewell, my dearest Catharine, I hope we shall meet in a few days ; and that you will make up your mind to remain with me during the whole of our short stay in London, when I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to Mr. Damer, his amiable wife, and the *most* amiable and lovely of men.

I am ever, &c. &c.,

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Her faults he knew not—love is always blind,
But every charm revolved within his mind ;
Her tender age, her form divinely fair,
Her easy motion, her attractive air,
Her sweet behaviour, her enchanting face.
Her moving softness, and majestic grace.”

THE beginning of January found the Malvertons and Mandevilles in London ; the latter come up as usual for their winter campaign, the former to make preparations for going to India ; the Countess having received letters from her husband, expressing his wish that she and her daughters should join him in the East.

Since coming to town, Lady Georgiana had been paid great attention by the Marquess of

Glenallan (uncle to that Mr. Douglas who stopped for a few days at Abbeville during the summer); and the Countess began seriously to reflect whether, if he should make proposals for her daughter, it would not be for the happiness of the latter to accept them. His Lordship was certainly more than double her age; plain in person, and weak in character. But to his elevated rank he united an Indian fortune and incomparable temper; and if marrying at eighteen a beautiful and accomplished girl to a man little calculated to inspire love, however he might gratitude and esteem, was a sacrifice, it was one better to be made than to take her to a climate with which her delicate constitution could not long contend, or leave her unmarried in England, where, whether she was in the retirement which residing with Lady Malverton's friends would have afforded, or mixing in the gayer scenes of life, she would be exposed to dangers which, as Lord Glenallan's wife, she

would be at least preserved from. Impressed with these convictions, and finding Georgiana in no way averse to the Marquess, Lady Malverton, after many struggles between her parental and prudential feelings, at last determined on answering favourably the application for her daughter's hand, which it was no way doubtful Lord Glenallan waited but opportunity to make. He was constantly at Malverton House, sometimes with a request to Lady Georgiana and her sister to ride with him in the Park, at other times to inquire after their health, if they had been up late the night before, but more frequently with no apparent object at all, but to look at Georgiana, whose very presence seemed to make him happy. Of his partiality for the young lady there was equally discussion in the hall and drawing-room, as a letter from the Marquess's own man to a fellow-servant in the country will prove. After writing on different subjects, he says,

“ But Tom, I have not yet told you the best piece of news; which is, that my Lord is certainly a-going to be married, and to the loveliest young lady you ever in your life saw: *he* is, to my thinking, comely enough; but *she*, why, when she appears, it is like the rising of the sun on the blue mountains of Glenallan! And so affable and so kind as she is! ’Twas but the other day, as my Lord was handing her, beautifully dressed, to her carriage, she turned to me, who was standing near, and inquired how my cold was, when I never guessed she knew of my having one at all. So I bowed and thanked her Ladyship, and told her as how it was better. And my Lord laughed, and said London didn’t agree with me: and then told her, without caring for me to hear, though I did, that I was his most faithful servant, and he couldn’t do without me. ‘ I hope,’ says she, smiling like an angel, ‘ that he’ll soon be

your Georgiana's also.' And my Lord looked in good faith as if he hoped it too, and he put her into the carriage, and told her it depended on her. Now would you believe it, Thomas, sweet and amiable as Lady Georgiana is, there are some of our people here, unkind enough to say that the hour in which my Lord first saw her will prove the most unhappy he ever knew. But they wouldn't say it had they ever seen her as I have, when I've been over at Malverton House, sitting for a whole evening by the side of my Lord, when younger gentlemen and handsomer gentlemen have been soliciting her to dance; and when my Lady Alicia, her sister, but not half so handsome as herself, has been dancing and flirting. No; while she looks so innocent, I cannot but believe her amiable; and though she has no fortune, it is of no consequence, for my Lord has more than enough for her and himself: and I hope I shall yet see

her mistress of the bonny braes of Glenallan.

No more at present from, dear Tom,

Yours, &c. &c.

ARTHUR M^c CULLOCH.

From the Marquess of Glenallan to the Earl of Arabin.

MY DEAR LORD,

Every thing is going on prosperously in this quarter: the lovely Georgiana has consented to be mine, and I am the happiest of men! Were it possible that you and your sweet sister, Lady Isabel, could come up to town, how happy should we be to have you present at our wedding. If that is impossible, I shall certainly comply with your request, and make to Arabin Castle one of our first visits, as it will be one of our most agreeable. You are right in imagining that the future Marchioness of Glenallan would grace the halls of Holyrood; but wrong

in supposing that my Georgiana will not *infinitely* prefer retirement in the shades of Glenallan. To the latter, by the bye, we shall set off on the day we are married, and remain at it for a few days. Douglas, who is probably to meet us there, will no longer find in me the indefatigable sportsman, willing to follow him from daybreak to nightfall, over hill and dale, with my gun and dogs; but the happy and attentive husband, enjoying with his present wife, all that felicity he once believed buried in the grave of his late one.

In haste I remain, my dear Lord,

Yours, &c. &c.

GLENALLAN.

*From Lady Georgiana Granville to Miss
M^c Dougal*

MY DEAR JULIET,

You have probably heard first from every one else, what, as most concerning, you ought to

have heard first from me ; namely, that I am going to be married. To tell you what commenced my conquest of Lord Glenallan's heart, I cannot ; for I am sure I do not know. I am only aware of what concluded it,—my appearance when dressed in the likeness of an Angel.

In the morning of the day which, as it afterwards turned out, decided my future destiny, I had playfully appealed to him to fix the character I should assume at a fancy ball in the evening. He determined in favour of that of an Angel ; and as I observed every one appeared in the character most opposite to her own, I made no objection to it ; but, dressed in muslin, with a sky-blue scarf floating through my hair, (which, carelessly confined, hung in ringlets about my shoulders,) descended at ten o'clock to the drawing-room, expecting to find my mother, sister, &c. waiting my coming to depart, when, instead of them or any one else, I found alone, extended on the sofa, with no

light in the room but what the fire afforded—
Lord Glenallan.

“ You beautiful, divine creature !” exclaimed he, springing up and throwing himself before me ; “ can heaven itself produce your prototype ? No, not heaven or earth : and learn, all perfect woman ! that you are, and have from the first moment I saw you, been dearer to me than either.”

“ Rise, rise, my Lord,” cried I ; “ it is a fellow-creature you address, and this language is impious.”

“ Never,” said the Marquess, “ till your lips have decided my fate—till this hand by rejecting mine has made me the most miserable, or by accepting, the most happy of men.”

I scarce knew what to reply : I believe I told him that if he could gain my mother’s consent, he need not despair of her daughter’s.

Whatever I said, it was sufficient to throw him into raptures, which were fortunately in-

interrupted by the entrance of my grandmamma, the Countess Dowager, and Alicia : the former in character of Meg Merrilies, which her tall, bony figure and marked features well enabled her to personify ; the latter somewhat similarly attired, but representing a youthful Gipsev. My mother and uncle soon joined us ; one dressed as a Nun, the other as a Jew, and we set out for the ball. While there, I might in reality have passed for an Angel, or some unearthly thing, for all my thoughts were abstracted from the scene around me ; and my prospects as the wife elect of Lord Glenallan alone occupied my imagination. Among a thousand others, I saw the Mandevilles there, the girls as Circassian Slaves, their mother as a Sultana. The gentlemen of their party were not in character, at least the Count de Meurville and two Mr. Mandevilles were not : whether they had more in their train I cannot tell. The former is certainly the most interesting

of men. “ Oh, that *he* were Lord Glenallan or I Agnes Mandeville !” I could not help inwardly exclaiming ; as the latter, with the Count, came up to speak to me. De Meurville, looking as he always does, so dignified, and yet so mild—she so artless and yet so lovely ! Ah ! Juliet, he is the kind of man with whom I am convinced I could be happy in *any* country ; while with the Marquess I shall only enjoy myself in that which is the centre of his consequence and mine.

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I continue my letter, after having thrown it aside for a few days, but only to make a short addition before concluding it. My time is completely taken up in preparations for my marriage, which is to be solemnized this day fortnight. The royal personages who presided at my birth will grace my nuptials ; and the hand of the King of England will give away her whom the lips of the Prince of Wales first

named. Yesterday I sat for the last time for my picture, which makes me out a thousand times handsomer than I really am (though of course not half so handsome as I appear in Lord Glenallan's eyes). This morning, I, with my mother, sister, &c., spent entirely at Hamlet's arranging about the setting of my diamonds: under mine, I now include those which belonged to the late Marchioness of Glenallan; as well as those which were presented by the Prince at my birth; altogether they form a magnificent collection. Apropos to the former; she may have been very good, but I greatly suspect, a very dowdy, spiritless sort of personage. All things shall be widely different under my administration, to what they were under her's. Glenallan Castle shall no longer in sullen, silent dignity be illuminated with setting suns, or shall melancholy, desolate galleries revibrate the passing footstep.—No, every sun shall shine on festivity and joy!

Every day shall be delightful—every night a jubilee ! The halls shall ring to dancing ! And the woods to the cries of the huntsmen !

“ I'll call on Echo to rejoice.”

Farewell, my dearest Juliet ; when next you hear of, or see me, it will probably be as Lady Glenallan, but whether bearing that, or any other name, I shall ever be the same to you.

Believe me, &c. &c.

GEORGIANA GRANVILLE.”

CHAPTER V.

“ Did I not hear him, as he prest
The frail-fond trembler to a breast,
Which she had doom’d to sin and strife,
Call her,—think what?—his life ! His life !
Yes—such the love-taught name, the first
That ruin’d man to woman gave.”

MOORE.

“ I NEVER saw white moss-roses before,” said De Meurville, as on the morning of the masquerade he was indolently leaning against the chimney-piece in the Mandevilles’ drawing-room ; and looking at some Agnes wore in her bosom.”

“ You are in love with these flowers,” observed she, carelessly taking them from her dress to give him ; “ you have done nothing but notice them since you came in. They are

a few my brother, who breakfasted in the country this morning, brought me. I suppose they were reared in a hot-house."

"I'm in *love*, Agnes," said De Meurville, throwing himself on the sofa, "with her whom *those* flowers adorn; with her who wants not adornment to be more lovely and beautiful than my imagination could have pictured a *woman*, or my fondest wishes believed her."

"Clifford," cried she, with that sweet and

' Self-betraying air,
Which women loved and flatter'd, love to wear,'

"Have you forgotten so soon the lecture I gave you the other evening?"

"No," returned he with a sigh; "but though it was very eloquent, it was very inapplicable; for I never did nor ever could flatter *you*. All that I say is, must be truth."

"Well! don't talk of me at all then," said Agnes, "or I shall be afraid to be alone with you."

"You, and you only, Agnes," replied De

Meurville, looking down at an apron she was spangling, "occupy my thoughts, whether when we are alone together, or mixing in the midst of a crowded assembly. Engaged in the latter, I can but look at you, love you, attend to your most trifling wants; but why, when enjoying the former, should I be debarred of speaking to you of yourself, from telling you how dear you are to me; that if you are charming in the eyes of others, you are more,—oh, how much more!—in mine."

"Ask your own heart, De Meurville," said she, "why I debar you from that, or any other pleasure it is in my power to afford you."

He was silent.

"Let us," said she, removing the hand with which he was gently endeavouring to disengage her from her work, "let us talk on some other subject:—shall you come with us to the masquerade this evening?"

“No, I think not; I dine out. Besides,” added he, playfully, “if I did, you’d be out of character in being a Slave. I should rather go as one, and my Agnes as a Princess.”

“Oh! you wouldn’t answer for a slave,” said she, in the same tone; “you’d be too proud for that.”

“Was I ever proud to you?” asked De Meurville, fondly.

“No, not to me, certainly,” said Agnes, and she sighed.

“Tell me,” cried Clifford, “have you the slightest, remotest wish that I should go, and I will, were it only to watch over and protect you.”

“I think you may as well,” said she, with assumed indifference, “for it may amuse you; and your being in or out of character, is immaterial. My brothers will be the latter, Mr. Damer merely a domino.”

“ And his wife ? ”

“ Oh ! poor Caroline is frightened at the idea of going at all, and wants to stay at home.”

“ Apropos to her,” said the Count de Meurville ; “ I was glad, Agnes, you did not take part with those who were laughing at her the other evening, when she had left the room.”

“ I must be very ungrateful,” observed she, “ if I *had*, if I *ever* could again, after her kindness to me during our late journey.”

“ The woman is mistaken,” said the Count De Meurville, seriously ; “ who ever thinks to rise by depreciating another—mistaken, indeed ! if ’tis *man* she seeks to please. But, Agnes, I must bid you farewell,” added he, rising quickly ; “ I made an appointment to call on a gentleman at four, and ’tis just that hour now : I had no idea of its being so late :—

‘ With thee conversing, I forget all time.’ ”

“ Well, may we reckon on seeing you in the

evening?" inquired she, as she extended her hand to meet his.

"Oh, yes, certainly! wherever you are will be my attraction. In the meantime, remember me to your mother and sisters: they have had a fine morning for driving." So saying, the Count de Meurville left her, and Agnes went to the window to look at him as he walked down the street.

The autumnal excursion had fully enlightened Mr. and Mrs. Damer as to the sentiments entertained by Agnes and the Count de Meurville for each other; and having no interest in either betraying or encouraging their attachment, it had every opportunity for increase and developement, which being constantly thrown together (sometimes in the most romantic situations, at all times in the most unreserved and familiar) could produce. Mr. Damer, with the thoughtlessness and generosity of youth, considered nothing but love of impor-

tance in married life, and the idea of separating lovers, because their union would occasion the loss of fortune on one side and the breaking of a vow on the other, he would have laughed at as absurd; and Mrs. Damer, though she might have been necessitated to bear, could not be supposed so insensible to the unkindness she had experienced since her introduction into the Mandeville family, as to exert herself in averting an event which she thought it very justifiable to presume Lady Mandeville might have foreseen, when she threw so completely in the way of her daughter, a man interesting and accomplished as the Count de Meurville.

The masquerade to which the Mandevilles went in the evening, and at which Lady Georgiana appeared in the character of an Angel, presented the usual motley assemblage of figures. Here a Flower-girl persecuted you with her nosegays; there a Watchman stunned you with his loud

vociferations of the hour. Sometimes you were haunted by a Fortune-teller, pertinaciously insisting on acquainting you with your destiny, at others dodged by a Pedlar displaying his pack. Now a whining Beggar solicited your charity ; and now a Sultana almost set you on fire as she passed in a blaze of jewellery.

But it was a figure far different from the latter, and unlike the former, that attracted, and from the moment of attracting, engrossed the attention of Agnes Mandeville. It was that of a woman, short, masked, and possessing a voice whose shrill, sepulchral tones were exerted in the execution of some sea-songs and dying confessions, which she continued to scream about the room.

From the moment of her entrance, Agnes found herself the object of the Ballad-singer's particular notice. At first she disregarded it, and attributed it to the peculiarity of her own costume ; but then each of her sisters were

equally striking, and they were disregarded. What this could mean she knew not; but she was glad to take the arm of De Meurville, who presently joined their party in company with another gentleman.

“The Miss Mandevilles in chains; and *deservedly!*” cried the latter; whom the disguise of a friar’s cowl and cloak did not prevent them from recognizing as Colonel Blomberg. “I am not sorry to see those conquered themselves who so often conquered others.”

“But I am surprized,” cried Lady Mandeville, “to see you performing saint who have so often played sinner.”

“Oh, every one is reforming now; and I among the number.”

“Thou doest well, friend,” said a Quaker, as she passed.

“But thou hast done better, friend, I suspect,” returned the Friar; “thou hast no need for repentance.”

“Can you, and you, and you say that?” sung the ballad-singer abruptly, as she rushed through their party.

“Confound the old hag,” cried Sidney; “what does she mean?”

“Ask him, ask her!” said the woman, looking back with a wild and satanic smile at the Count de Meurville and Agnes.

“Foolish woman!” said the former, laughing. But the latter trembled so, that De Meurville asked her aside, if she supposed it “a voice from Vienna?”

“It is a voice,” returned Agnes, as she, the Count, and Madelina took a turn about the room, “that penetrates to my heart.”

“Yes, the woman’s a great bore,” observed Miss Mandeville carelessly; as with her black eyes glaring through her mask, the ballad-singer crossed them, chanting a low and gloomy death-song. “But see those admirable figures!”

added she, pointing to a Jew and a Sailor who stood in converse.

“If Mr. Douglas is in England,” said Agnes, “that Sailor is he.”

“And if he is not?” said the Count de Meurville.

“Why, then it is the person in the world most like him.”

“There is one,” said Miss Mandeville, looking at Lady Georgiana, “whom no one in the world is like; who is the very divinity she is personifying.

“It can’t be said,” observed a distracted Poet, as he overheard her remark,

‘That fools rush in where angels dare not tread.’”

“I think not,” said Miss Mandeville, as they stopped to speak to Lady Georgiana.

“I’m looking for my mother,” observed her Ladyship, laughing; “Lord Glenallan tells me she has changed her dress.”

“You’ve a fortune-teller beside you,” said the Count de Meurville; “perhaps she’ll assist you in the discovery.”

“Let me first introduce her as Lady Alicia Granville, to you and your companions, and then try her skill in necromancy,” returned Lady Georgiana.

“You do well to introduce her, indeed,” said Miss Mandeville; “I shouldn’t have recognized your sister disguised by a mask.”

“You’d be at a still greater loss to recognize her mother,” observed Lord Glenallan, “though I’ll give you a clue by saying she’s in our neighbourhood.”

“Provoking man!” cried Lady Alicia playfully; “can’t you point her out?”

“She is not, surely,” said Miss Mandeville, “that figure in the red cloak? personifying, I believe, Meg Merrilies.”

“Oh, no; that’s my youthful grandmamma,” replied Lady Alicia.

While the two parties continued engaged in conversation, Agnes alone, as she hung on the arm of her lover, was silently and thoughtfully observing the conduct of the Ballad-singer; who, though she affected to be engrossed in singing and hawking the songs contained in her basket, was watching the Count de Meurville and Agnes with an attention and, as far as could be judged from the expression of her eyes and mouth (which the mask left displayed) a malignity the most remarkable. Wild as was the conjecture, the idea that it might be Annette Dettinghorffe would frequently cross the mind of Agnes. The former might have heard of, or suspect the Count de Meurville's attachment in England, and have come over to judge of its truth. Annette answered in person, from all accounts, to the woman before her, and in mind she had often heard her pronounced capable of any exertion. There was a foreign accent in her voice which favoured the idea; and

De Meurville's not discovering her, in no way destroyed it, for he was engaged in talking and laughing with every one else. The more Agnes looked at the Ballad-singer, the more were her suspicions confirmed. It was no common gaze returned hers; it was no friendly smile beheld her evident agitation: it was such a gaze and such a smile as Satan wore when he beheld our first parents in Paradise; and Agnes sunk beneath its dire expression. But her fears amounted to terror, when walking across the room with the Count De Meurville, the Ballad-singer suddenly brushed closely beside her, and whispered "Annette!" She started; and by her emotion recalled the Count, whose attention had been arrested by the entrance of some figures grotesquely dressed.

"You are faint, you are ill!" said he quickly, seeing her pale as ashes; "what is the matter? Let us leave this room."

“ I wish I had never entered it,” returned she faintly.

“ Has any thing, has any one alarmed you, my love ?” asked he fondly, as they went out on a lighted gallery.

“ Oh ! that woman, De Meurville,” cried Agnes, in a voice of terror, “ how she looked at me, how she looked at you ! I shall never, never forget it. And her voice—oh ! that I had never heard it.”

“ What woman, my angel ?” inquired he as they turned into an apartment which opened from the gallery. “ Is it that horrible Ballad-singer who has frightened you so.”

“ She has almost deprived me of reason,” said Agnes, as she and Clifford hung over the fireplace ; “ I wish I was at home—I wish I had never come here.”

“ My life, my love !” exclaimed De Meurville.

“Your life, your love!” repeated a voice behind them.

“She is there,” said Agnes, with a scream; and she threw herself into the arms of the Count de Meurville.

He turned quickly round—“Begone, for Heaven’s sake!” he cried, to the Ballad-singer, who was standing in the midst of the room; “you are destroying this lady’s peace.”

“Your life, your love,” said the woman, in low and ominous accents, “shall live to loathe your very name!” And so saying she quitted the room.

“First must she loathe her own,” murmured Agnes, faintly.

“Don’t let that fiend alarm you,” said De Meurville; “she’s mad, I believe,” he added, smiling, and trying to rally her spirits.

Agnes affected to believe so too, not wishing to infuse into De Meurville’s mind the suspi-

cions which racked her own, for they might be unfounded, and if on investigation they proved to be, it would but convey to her lover the mortifying conviction of her conscience accusing her of some impropriety in her conduct towards him, by having conjured up a phantom to reprove her with it. And whether it was Annette or any one else who had hitherto haunted her, when she and De Meurville returned to the room in which the masquerade was held, the person had disappeared ; never more, as it afterwards turned out, to meet Agnes, but in circumstances the most dire and distressing under which woman could meet woman.

CHAPTER VI.

“What winning graces, what celestial mien !
She moves a Goddess, and she looks a queen.”

No lover was ever more eager to obtain the object of his affections than Lord Glenallan to possess Lady Georgiana Granville. Time seemed eternal but when employed in preparations for the period which was to render her his ; amusements insipid, till they could be enjoyed with her as his wife, and mercenary considerations contemptible, when the blessing to be obtained was so invaluable. In short, he asked but life —life with Georgiana, and imagined, that in contributing to her happiness he should for ever ensure his own. Mistaken man ! he was yet to

prove the worthlessness of the prize for which he panted. However, the day, the hour at length arrived; and Georgiana assumed that title, the possession of which was to atone for every enjoyment it did not comprehend in itself. At nine o'clock her marriage was performed in the very apartment of Malverton-house, which eighteen years ago had witnessed her christening, and in a manner the most awfully impressive. How many mingled emotions contended in the bosom of Lady Malverton during its celebration. How many past scenes, in which Georgiana had been her companion, crowded to her recollection, as if only to enhance the regrets which the prospect of the future afforded; when she would be separated for years, if not for ever, from the daughter over whom from infancy she had watched so fondly; and divided by oceans, her fate would become as doubtful to her mother as it was important. From reflections such as these, Lady Mal-

verton was roused by the whole room ringing in congratulations to the Marchioness of Glenallan: and then she would have given worlds to burst into tears, and embrace her once more as Georgiana Granville. But such an effusion of feeling would have been inadmissible—for royalty presided; and the Countess retired to her own apartment as soon as the commencement of the ball which ensued, allowed her to do it unobserved. In the meantime Lady Glenallan admitted no such reflections to alloy her happiness; but, beautiful as an angel, was enjoying the admiration and receiving the compliments of all around her,—every attitude of hers pronounced more graceful than the former—every look more lovely than the last. On the following morning, the Marquess and Marchioness, with Lady Alicia Granville, set out for Glenallan Castle in Scotland, to which, as thinking very highly of its beauties himself, the Marquess was anxious to introduce his young

bride. The weather was very fine, and Lady Glenallan enjoyed a journey rendered easy and agreeable by every comfort and indulgence which rank, fortune, and a doating husband, could bestow. They were met a few miles from the Castle by Mr. Douglas, whom business had called from London about the period of his uncle's marriage, but who had been in town a short time preceding, and at the masquerade, when he was recognized by one of the Miss Mandevilles.

“ I have just dispersed,” cried Douglas, after shaking hands with the Marchioness and Lady Alicia, “ a parcel of people who were assembled a little farther on, with the intention of taking the horses from the carriage; they were armed with ropes, &c. for the purpose: and I thanked them in your and Lady Glenallan's name for the kindness they proposed, but I knew you would dispense with the performance.”

“ You did well,” said the Marquess, “ we would much rather proceed without delay. Indeed, I am afraid,” added he, looking fondly at his bride, who, muffled up in beautiful furs, had sunk back in a corner of the carriage, “ that Georgiana is nearly overcome with fatigue and cold as it is.”

The Marchioness, with a languid smile, disclaimed being so; and Mr. Douglas, after informing her that Lady Penelope (alluding to his aunt) would have tea and coffee ready to refresh her, rode back to the Castle to announce their coming.

It was a clear, starry night at the latter end of February, on which the travellers entered Glenallan; and passing through its dark umbrageous shades, with no noise to disturb the stillness which prevailed, but the hooting of owls and the dashing of torrents, Lady Glenallan felt impressions of sadness she was at a loss to account for. And the trifling conver-

sation kept up between her husband and sister seemed irrelevant to the majesty of Nature, as it was uncongenial to the elevation of her own feelings. But in a few minutes they stopped at the entrance of the Castle, and lights, noise, and bustle dissipated these ideas. The hall was lined with servants, all anxious to welcome the return of their master; and those who had not seen, to behold the far-famed beauty of his bride. Somewhat exhausted by the journey, but beautiful and interesting, Lady Glenallan, hanging on the arm of her husband, passed like a princess through the admiring group, and was introduced by the Marquess to Lady Penelope Douglas, his maiden sister, who, stiff as buckram, stood at the door of an apartment at the upper end of the hall. This lady had been very averse to the idea of her brother's marrying, and consequently prepared to meet his bride with no very partial eyes. But Lady Glenallan would have disarmed a demon's

wrath, while looks were her pleaders, and even the frozen heart of Lady Penelope was softened on beholding her. She no longer wondered at her brother's infatuation, however she might regret it, and wished his wife "welcome, most welcome, to Glenallan Castle."

Assembled in a comfortable room, and around a blazing fire, the evening passed cheerfully away. Lady Penelope, aware that her future residence at the Castle, and enjoyment of its comforts, would entirely depend on the pleasure of its new mistress, was from policy inclined to make herself agreeable. Lady Alicia, who as the sister of Lady Glenallan, appeared a plain woman, but who, as almost any one else's would have passed for a pretty one, was lively and pleasant; the Marquess, of course the happiest of men, and Douglas, high in health and spirits, laughed and talked at and on any subject. For Lady Glenallan he was drawing an animated sketch of the desertion of the neigh-

bourhood she was come into, when his uncle stopped him with—"Come, come, Douglas, you shan't frighten her with this gloomy description of yours."

The Marchioness smiled. "Unfortunately for its succeeding in frightening me," said she, "Mr. Douglas once drew so bright a picture of the beauties of Glenallan, as to convince me that the person who could enjoy them would never wish to stray beyond them."

"How little I then thought," observed Douglas, in a tone of retrospection, "that that person would ever be you! How little I could have hoped it!" he added in a lower tone.

The Marchioness and Lady Alicia, feeling themselves fatigued after their journey, early made a movement for retiring, and Lady Penelope conducted them to their apartments by staircases and galleries so grand as to impress Lady Glenallan with a very magnificent idea of the mansion over which she was mistress, and

anticipate with pleasure a survey of it in the morning.

Without fatiguing our readers with an individual sketch of every day passed by the Marchioness at Glenallan, it will be sufficient to say that the impressions she made during the fortnight of her residence there were in the highest degree favourable. Nothing could exceed the condescension both of her and of her lord. In the latter indeed, as customary, it was less remarkable; but in her, whom report had represented possessing height of manner, and pride of beauty, it was as unexpected as it was gratifying. On Sunday, she and the Marquess, with the rest of the family, attended divine service in the neighbourhood, and invited the clergyman to return with them to dinner. In the evening, prayers were regularly conducted in the Castle chapel, during the intervals of which Lady Glenallan performed sacred music on the organ.

Mr. Douglas had not exaggerated in his de-

scription of the neighbourhood : it was indeed a most deserted one, and though every family within the distance of twenty miles came to wait on the Marchioness, their number did not exceed five or six. Her Ladyship returned their visits with all the ceremony and appendages suitable to her exalted rank ; but her greater delight was, when she and her sister, divested of formality, and the distinctions of dress, could ride and walk about with the Marquess and Mr. Douglas, among the romantic scenery of and surrounding Glenallan Castle. Among cliffs and precipices and woods and waterfalls, she was often amused to behold herself !—herself, to whom if it had been a few weeks ago foretold she would have been there, she would have laughed at the supposition. From rambles such as these they usually returned to a late dinner, at which there was, on most days, the addition of a few gentlemen.

The morning, however, at length arrived, on

which the terrace before Glenallan exhibited formidable signs of preparations for departure, and postilions, trunks, &c., were seen in all directions. The Marchioness, whose heart was hitherto unvitiated by the world, could not leave without regret a place where she had spent few indeed, but happy days ; and when Douglas was leading her to the carriage, which was to convey her away from it, she suddenly turned once more to Lady Penelope, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, “ Let me bid you again farewell ; I shall never forget your kindness to me ; no, never ! And farewell ! ” she continued, looking around her with streaming eyes, “ farewell dear, lovely Glenallan ; soon, very soon, will I return to your sweet scenery ! ” The Marquess threw his arm around her, and hurried her to the carriage ; Lady Alicia followed, and Douglas, who was to accompany them back to town, mounted his horse and galloped forward, while Lady Penelope stood at the hall-

door till they were out of sight, and then re-entered the Castle with a melancholy face, foreboding that Lady Glenallan would never return to it the unsophisticated creature she left it. No, she was too beautiful—too attractive, to render that probable—not to say possible. And yet, if it were otherwise, she would, in the opinion of all she left behind, be little less than an archangel ruined.

CHAPTER VII.

“He spoke, and attention watched his lips—he reasoned, and conviction closed his periods.”

RASSELAS.

“I AM come to know,” said the Count de Meurville, as one Sunday evening he entered the drawing-room, where, just come up from the dining-parlour, Lady Mandeville, her daughters, and Mrs. Damer were assembled, “if you are any of you inclined to hear the Honourable and Rev. Stapleton Montfort preach to-night?”

“Certainly,” said Lady Mandeville, “if you thought it possible that we could get in at the Conduit chapel,” where he is to be heard.

“Oh! I’ll undertake to promise you shall,”

replied the Count; "for I know a lady who has a seat there, and who will be very happy to accommodate you."

"I fear we shall be late," said her Ladyship, looking at her watch; "however, some of us will put on our things, and as it is a fine night I think we may walk there."

Accordingly, she, Madelina, and Mrs. Damer, well muffled up, and escorted by the Count de Meurville, and another gentleman or two, set out. They found the chapel, as they expected, crowded to the last degree; and it was with difficulty they made their way to the seat appointed, which was in the gallery. Prayers were concluding as they entered, and in a few minutes the preacher appeared. Every murmur of disturbance that had not hitherto ceased was at this moment hushed: he possessed indeed a form calculated to inspire awe in the most indifferent beholder; eyes whose soul-searching expression seemed capable of reading

the inmost recesses of the heart ; and a voice whose deep thrilling accents must, for a time at least, arrest the most wandering imagination, or still the most violent passions which could disturb the human bosom. For the text of his discourse, he pronounced the solemn words, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth : ” and then proceeded to observe, that though he made the supposition of every one there present entertaining this belief, of his addressing no one unhappy enough to doubt that his Saviour lived, he would yet call their attention to the uselessness of professing such a belief if it were uninfluencing to their conduct ; the inefficacy of remembering Christ as their Redeemer, if they forgot that He would also be their Judge. On the contrary, he said, it is in the latter character we should, for the most part, consider Him ; and then this vain delusive world—this world, which in its happiest moments, arrayed in its most endearing joys, is but the wretched prototype of that to

which we are hastening—would have less power to attract us to evil ; we should remember how contemptible it would one day render us in His sight ! in the sight of men and of angels ! He drew an animated picture of the delusions of life ; its transient joys, its bitter sorrows, its endless disappointments. “What ! what !” he emphatically exclaimed, “is this world to us that we should so much value it ? What enjoyment—what pleasure can it produce, take it from East to West, from North to South, for which it is worth while to sacrifice eternity ?”

“Christian mothers,” he cried, “’tis you I would address. How can you answer to your consciences, to lead your daughters to the altar of fashion instead of the altar of Christ ?” When I see the blooming faces now looking up at me and hanging on my words, among whose possessors some may have received durable impressions of religion, and others wanting but advice and direction for ever to impress it in

their bosoms ; when I fancy those creatures intended for heaven, but dragged down to earth, hearing the lips of man efface the truths which once fell from the lips of *Christ* ! I feel language cold ; enthusiasm inadequate to express my sensations. I know no words in which to address the mother, who, content to see her daughter followed, admired, envied in this world, forgets that it is no preparation for another ; forgets that on the bed of suffering and of death her loved child will one day feel the insufficiency, the more than insufficiency, the total uselessness of beauty, dress, distinction, but to emblazon her misery, and in frenzy be tempted to curse the parent who taught her to prize such paltry things." Thus he went on, his hearers hanging breathless on his words, and conceiving

"Truths divine came mended from that tongue."

But as he approached the conclusion of his discourse he drew a brighter picture ! He

painted the happiness of that parent “ who should present at the bar of Heaven, as objects worthy of immortality, those creatures who had been the subjects of her fondest solicitude on earth ; when, in presence of angels, of archangels, of God himself, she would behold them for ever blessing, and for ever blest ; beings in whom mortality was extinct, over whom sin could never more have dominion.”

He ceased, and a buzz, rather intimative than expressive of applause, ensued. But what a different scene now succeeded ; what a contrast did the cursing and jostling of footmen, impatient to reach those for whom they came provided with cloaks and shawls, the joking and threats of coachmen and chairmen impeded in their progress to the door, present to those ears which still vibrated to the godlike accents of the preacher, proclaiming joy and salvation to the hearts which responded to the peals of the organ, as it continued to thunder “ I am the resurrection and the life.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Think not the husband gain’d, that all is done,
The prize of happiness must still be won ;
And oft the careless find it to their cost,
The lover in the husband may be lost !”

FROM an indefinite feeling of envy, which was at all times created by hearing of the elevation or distinction of another, however little it could affect herself, Miss Staples read with no very complacent feelings, among the presentations at the last Drawing-room, “ The Marquess and Marchioness of Glenallan, on their marriage ;” and was preparing, after a hasty “ dear me !” to run on to the next Marchioness or Countess, had not the whole breakfast-party, of which Mr. Winters formed one,

rang in exclamations of "The dear Georgiana!" "The sweet creature!" "Only conceive how beautiful she must have looked!" &c. &c.

"I see," said Miss Staples, who had not joined in the foregoing exclamations, "that there were more of our friends at the Drawing-room than Lord and Lady Glenallan. Here's the Countess of Malverton, and Lady A. Granville, to take leave on their departure for India."

"Ah, poor Alicia!" observed Mrs. Vigers, "it must have been a melancholy presentation for her. But I know she thought it would be but a correct thing to go to Court on that occasion."

"Certainly," said Mr. Winters; "the wife of the Governor-General of India is not a person so unimportant that she ought to leave England unannounced."

"But what did dear Georgiana wear?" in-

quired Mrs. Vigers. "Do look, Sarah, at the dresses," she continued, addressing Miss Staples.

Miss Staples did, and read aloud what was worn by the Marchioness of Glenallan, omitting, with a contemptuous smile, the compliment which succeeded it, "of her Ladyship being too distinguished by nature to need the distinctions of dress," and substituting for it a dry remark of her own, "that the thing must have been very expensive."

Mr. Winters secretly smiled, and observed in somewhat of a meaning tone, "That to Lord Glenallan's wife expense would ever be a matter of little moment."

"Yes, certainly," said Miss Staples, biting her lips, "if he has the fortune they say, she may dress like a Princess."

"I am sure she will always look like one," returned Mr. Winters, "whether she is dressed like one or not."

“In her own opinion,” hovered on the lips of Miss Staples, but she cleared her throat, and briskly turned over the paper.

When Miss Darcliff, who had taken up another, suddenly exclaimed, “I declare, Charlotte Mandeville is married !”

“Married ! to whom ?” cried every one.

She read as follows : — “Married, on the 7th ult. John Russell, Esqr. of Bloomsbury Square, to Charlotte Mandeville, third daughter of Sir William Mandeville, Bart. of Hermitage in Surrey.”

“Well, to be sure !” said Mrs. Vigers ; “so Miss Charlotte is married before her sister. I wonder what Madelina says to that.”

“It must have been a very sudden match,” observed Mrs. Vigers, “or we should have heard something about it before, constantly receiving letters as we do from town.”

“Mr. Russell was taken by storm, not by siege, I suspect,” said Mr. Winters, laughing ;

“ and Charlotte’s black eyes were the efficient artillery.”

“ It is rather a falling off, certainly,” said Miss Staples, maliciously ; “ for a young lady who looked out for nobility to take up with plain John Russell. But indeed I think she has done very wisely, and that if Miss Mandeville made a similar match, instead of setting her cap at Lord this and that, it would be greatly to the purpose.”

But while the marriage of Charlotte Mandeville was thus quietly discussed at Abbeville, it was creating surprize, indignation, &c., in the fashionable world. Mr. Russell was cursing himself as a dupe and a fool for having entailed upon himself a misery so great as he considered the possession of a wife ; and even Charlotte, though she had obtained the object of her ambition in being married, began to think that, unless her prospects brightened, she had made sacrifices of delicacy and dignity to

become so, for which the possession of a mean, ill-tempered husband was a most deplorable compensation. To her mother, however, did Charlotte, in the bitterness of her mortification, determine to attribute every misfortune of which this marriage might be the result; for it was by her advice that, a fortnight after her acquaintance with Mr. Russell, it had taken place, and then only after scenes of altercation and compulsion which would have been intolerable to a feeling and delicate mind—but Charlotte Mandeville's was not that mind. Mr. Russell had been accidentally introduced to the family, and Lady Mandeville, ever on the watch to entrap any man of fortune with a view to one of her daughters, fixed upon him, whom she understood to have amassed a good deal of money in the West Indies, as a desirable mark for her manœuvring. Consequently he was beset with invitations, and, finding it a pleasant house to gain the *entrée* of, generally accepted

them, unaware of the price he was to pay for all the civility and attentions which were lavished on him. But in an evil hour, and after a too free indulgence in drinking, to which he was attached, Mr. Russell let fall some expressions in conversation with Charlotte, which she thought proper to construe into a downright declaration of love, and reported as such to her mother. Lady Mandeville, after the lapse of a day or two, during which they saw nothing of the lover, insisted on her son's calling on him to demand a confirmation of the proposals made to his sister, or the satisfaction of a gentleman. Astonished, but more angry than astonished, for Mr. Russell entertained a slight recollection of having been guilty of some folly in his intoxication which his returning reason condemned, he at first denied, but afterwards confessed some unmeaning expressions having escaped him, which he should not have conceived any young lady would have been ridiculous

enough to translate into sense. Mr. Mandeville assumed a high tone, professed himself at a loss to understand his meaning, and only anxious to know which satisfaction he chose to give, his hand or his sword; that his sister was not to be trifled with, and that young ladies accustomed to hear professions devoid of any meaning, were ones to whom she bore no affinity. In short, Mr. Russell, whose timidity of temper caused him to prefer any alternative to fighting, was actually frightened into a connexion to which he had an antipathy; and after negotiations, threats, and bribes, he was allied to heartlessness, coquetry, and extravagance, in the person of Charlotte Mandeville. But this marriage caused such unpleasant talk in London, and produced such a mortifying shyness on the part of those who had hitherto been most intimate with the Mandevilles, and in whose circles they had been the proudest to mix, that under the pretext of the young

lady's delicate health, the family found it convenient to remove to a watering-place some time before the season usually appointed for such sojourns; while the bride and bridegroom prepared to spend their unpromising honeymoon in France.

In the meantime, the splendid marriage, the brilliant presentation, the celebrated beauty of Lady Glenallan, rendered this a triumphant winter for the Countess of Malverton. No party was the attraction at which the Marchioness was not; no amusement the rage which she did not patronize; no fashion the popular till appeared in by her. To Georgiana the poet dedicated his verse—to Lady Glenallan the painter confined his pencil. Her fascinations and beauty were the theme of every tongue, and though they had been similarly great before as after marriage, the *portionless* daughter of Lord Malverton, and the splendid bride of the Marquess of Glenallan, received very dif-

ferent degrees of adoration. While the world, however, was perpetually discovering new attractions in the Marchioness, her husband was making discoveries of a nature less agreeable: namely, that her temper had at times none of the softness which characterized her beauty; that the creature whom he idolized as an angel, was in reality but a woman;—how unamiable a one at times, the following dialogue between her and her lord will serve for a proof.

“Georgiana, my love,” said the Marquess one morning as he entered the room where she was, and in which the footman had just left a note of invitation from the Duchess of Delmington, “you ’ll send an apology to her Grace, of course.”

“And why, of course, my Lord,” demanded his lady.

“Oh! you are aware,” said the Marquess quickly, as if it were a matter too decided to need investigation—“you are aware Lady Del-

mington is not a kind of woman in whose company you ought to be seen. She was the kept mistress long before she was the wife of the Duke of Delmington."

"Till you informed me, I was unacquainted with any such circumstance," replied the Marchioness coldly, "and dare say half the world are in a similar state of ignorance. Therefore I shall go."

"You are not in earnest?" said her lord, affecting to laugh.

"Never was more so in my life," returned the lady.

The Marquess looked a little surprised, but not being easily put out of temper, asked her, smiling, "If she had forgotten that day two months," alluding to its having been their wedding-day.

A vacant stare of the beautiful auburn eyes, and a request to repeat his question, was the only answer.

“I would ask,” said her Lord, still good-humouredly, “if you have forgotten that this day two months you swore ‘to love and to obey.’”

“I am not generally accustomed to be reminded of my duty,” said her Ladyship, sharply.

“Then I hope,” returned the Marquess mildly, but somewhat hurt by the asperity of her manner, “you are not in the custom of forgetting it.”

The spirit of Georgiana Granville rose very high in Lady Glenallan. “You have at least taken care,” said she, bursting into a passionate flood of tears, “that I shall not forget who has the power to enforce it.”

“Say not so, my love,” cried the Marquess, fondly embracing her; “but believe the first moment of my enforcing it would be the last of my expecting its fulfilment. Go to the Duchess of Delmington’s assembly, if it will afford you any pleasure, and believe that mine will ever consist in contributing to yours.”

“It will afford me no particular pleasure, certainly,” said Lady Glenallan, in somewhat of a softened tone, but still with the petulance of a spoiled child; “and I don’t know whether I shall care to go after all; but still you need not have anticipated my answer. If I had decided in the negative, it would then have been sufficient to inform me I had done as well in so doing; if otherwise, far from throwing any obstacle in the way yourself, you should have taken care that no one else did, and considered your wife’s dignity incapable of contamination.”

Differences such as these soon became very frequent between Lord and Lady Glenallan, but affected his happiness more than hers; for the Marquess, averse to gaiety and publicity, was left in solitude for the most part, to brood over unkindness and coldness in her manners, which she, surrounded by admirers and flatterers, was at once forgetful of, or remindful

only to be indifferent to the effect it produced. Dress, distinction, and splendour, became the idols of the Marchioness; and she enjoyed all the happiness they can produce to the fullest extent. Her clothes, which were of the most beautiful description that England or foreign climes could produce, were imitated, envied, and admired; herself courted, flattered, caressed, as a being of a superior order, and her assemblies and concerts celebrated for their fashion and elegance; while the coroneted carriages and magnificent equipages of Glenallan and Malverton blazed from morning till night in the fashionable streets of London.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Perhaps I was void of all thought,
Perhaps it was plain to foresee,
That a nymph so complete would be sought
By some swain more engaging than me.
Ah, love every hope can inspire,
It banishes wisdom the while ;
And the lip of the nymph we admire
Seems for ever adorn'd with a smile.”

SHENSTONE.

PREVIOUS to the departure of the Countess of Malverton and Lady Alicia Granville for India, which took place at the latter end of May, they, in company with Lord and Lady Glenallan, went down on a visit to Abbeville, the Countess being anxious to spend some time with her family before leaving England. After the round of dissipation in which they had been engaged for some time past in London,

there was a quiet here the most refreshing and delightful; and whether awakened in the morning by the noise of the rookery and warbling of birds, or enjoying in a later part of the day the fragrance of flowery banks and blossoming orchards, all was cheering and lovely. To the Countess in particular, the beauty of every scene was enhanced by the prospect of her speedy separation from it. To Lady Alicia it had almost the charm of novelty, for she had seldom been at Abbeville, and when she was it had been but for short periods. To the Marquess, country was always preferable to town; and even Lady Glenallan was not insensible to the charms of Nature, though she affected indifference to every thing else, and would point out to Lord Glenallan her favourite walks and trees with vivacity and interest. During the Marchioness's stay in Surrey, she occasionally accepted invitations in the neighbourhood, but apparently only to display her

own consequence and superiority, for she evidently received no gratification in so doing, and certainly conferred rather honour than pleasure ; for attention was obliged to be kept perpetually on the alert to anticipate her wants and wishes. Sometimes dying, as she declared herself, with cold, she would, muffled up in a shawl, hang over a fire in the midst of the most crowded room, and, regardless of the awkward feelings it created in her hostess, await with evident anxiety till Lord Glenallan should be released from the card-table, or anything else which occupied him, that they might go away. At others, overcome with the heat of the room, doors and windows were to be thrown open, to the great annoyance of those who were not similarly inconvenienced with warmth. In short, no one, whom every one was studying to please, and prepared on account of her youth, beauty, &c., to behold with partial eyes, could appear more unamiable than Lady Gle-

nallan. But the fact was, she was perfectly spoiled. The admiration of the world, and idolatry of her husband, had completed anything which her mother had left undone to render her so, and she now considered but her due attentions and regard which inspired gratitude in others. About a month after the departure of the Countess of Malverton and Lady Alicia Granville for India, during which the Marquess and Marchioness were stopping at Brighton, they went on a visit to Arabin Castle, the residence of the Earl of Arabin, and his sister, Lady Isabella Ireton, in Sussex. With both, Lord Glenallan had first become acquainted abroad, but neither the intimacy existing between them there, nor that which ensued on their return to England, had enlightened the Marquess with regard to their real character: had it done so, Arabin Castle would have been the last place to which he would have taken his wife, foreseeing, as he then might, that it would prove the

grave of every sentiment of affection which yet animated her heart towards himself. Lady Isabella had been left a widow at the early age of nineteen, and from the period of her husband's death, which took place about four years ago, had resided entirely with her brother, sometimes abroad, but for the most part at home; and during the last year both she and the Earl had remained in complete retirement at Arabin—a seclusion occasioned, as report whispered, by levities in her conduct, which had attracted the censure of the world; and by the notoriety into which an affair in Doctors' Commons had brought his Lordship, who was a complete man of gallantry.

But these circumstances were unknown to the Marquess and Marchioness of Glenallan, and to the latter in particular never did time pass more agreeably than that spent at Arabin Castle. In the society of the Earl and his sister she found a contrast to that generally

met with in the world: in the elegance of their minds a similarity to her own; in their pursuits a variety which excluded *ennui*. But to the Marquess, who could as little appreciate the superiority of their understandings as mingle in their varied occupations, the visit appeared very dull; and in the first few days of it he would frequently lament to Georgiana that his friend should have become so isolated from society, that Arabin Castle was not half so pleasant as it used to be. But from her he received so little sympathy, that by degrees he confined his regrets to his own bosom; content if he could steal away from a reading-party in the drawing-room, or a botanizing one in the garden, to the solitude of the Park, and the chat of the gamekeeper, which had greater charms for him than Byron's "Corsair," or Darwin's "Zoonomia."

In the meantime Lady Glenallan was constantly exposed to the company of a man who

presented altogether a contrast most unfavourable to the Marquess, and whose fascinations would have been well calculated to ensnare her to destruction, had not Lady Glenallan a preservative in pride, likely ever to protect her from crime. Lord Arabin united to all the manliness of mind and person we admire in one sex, all the gentleness of manner we love in the other: while Lord Glenallan would only acquire distinction where rank had precedence, and fortune command; Lord Arabin divested of either would appear superior and distinguished. Like her brother, Lady Isabel had native graces, which dignity of rank was as unnecessary to develope, as would be its deprivation to destroy; and both had, in manners at least, a sincerity which bore no stamp of the world. From the lips of the latter Lady Glenallan soon learnt what the eyes of the former eloquently expressed, namely, that she was the object of the Earl's most unbounded admira-

tion. Such a communication was at first received with assumed doubt and affected indifference, but while it was not received with indignation or contempt, Lady Isabel was encouraged frequently to give her proofs of it. "My brother," said she one evening, as, after leaving the dining-room, she and the Marchioness took a stroll out, "is quite jealous, Lady Glenallan, of your friendship for me, and fancies you more reserved to him than to others ; to him, who, of all others, most appreciates your loveliness and talents."

The Marchioness smiled. "Perhaps," said she, "if Lord Arabin knew me better, he would esteem me less."

"Not so," returned her flattering friend ; "the person happy enough to know Lady Glenallan best, would ever be the one to love and admire her most."

"By that rule," said the Marchioness, with

a sigh, "in my husband I should find my most devoted lover and admirer."

"And is he not so?" asked Isabel, with an insinuating smile.

"He would be so, I believe," returned her Ladyship, thoughtfully; "but,"—and she hesitated.

"Doesn't know how! is that it?" said the other, encouraged by the tone of the Marchioness.

Lady Glenallan raised her eyes to those of her companion, and each expressed what neither would exactly have spoken; but Lady Isabel presently resumed, not willing to lose such an opportunity of favouring her brother's interest, who relied on her artifices to forward that ruin which he was determined his fascinations should effect.

"There are men," said she, "who have a manner so different from others, a manner

which makes their most trifling attentions more acceptable than important services done you by those who do not possess it."

"There are men who possess that happy manner," returned the Marchioness, "and your brother, Lady Isabel, is among the number."

"Why, yes," said the latter, with affected unconcern, "if you knew Edward as well as I do, you would be able to speak from experience that he was."

"As it is," replied Lady Glenallan, "I can do so; years might have multiplied opportunities for its display, but days, and a very few, have amply proved to me its existence."

"Oh that he could hear you say that!" cried Isabel, with animation.

"It would be very unnecessary for Lord Arabin to hear asserted what he cannot doubt—his powers of pleasing."

"Unnecessary, indeed, Lady Glenallan, if they did not comprehend the power of pleasing you; but when they do, how much higher will

he prize them—how much happier will he exert them.”

“ Give him not reason to suppose, I beseech of you,” said the Marchioness, “ that for me in particular, his manners have attractions ; rather believe I spoke of their general fascination.”

Lady Isabel smiled a wily, winning smile ; “ are you afraid,” said she, “ of the man’s being too happy, who can never possess yourself ?”

Three weeks had elapsed since Lord and Lady Glenallan’s arrival at Arabin Castle, and the former became most anxious to quit it. To him the place was become as hateful as to the Marchioness it was delightful ; for from the time of their arrival there, or at least from a very short time after it, did he date that alienation of her affections, which was every day rendering him more unhappy ; and that it was produced by the little advantage to which he appeared in the company of the Earl and his accomplished sister, he was not so blind to their

attractions, or his own inferiorities, as to doubt. Contrasted with the elegant person of Lord Arabin, his own was awkward; exposed to the sprightly sallies of Lady Isabel, he appeared dull; and Georgiana seemed determined to convince both that affection at least had no influence in her marrying him, by a coldness the most mortifying, and asperity the most wounding. In this conduct she was imperceptibly encouraged by Lady Isabel, who had never forgiven the Marquess disappointing the sanguine hopes he had at one time, by his admiration, led her to entertain, of becoming Marchioness of Glenallan; and who determined to make him suffer through his wife, all the disappointment in love, she had in ambition. The Marquess, though far from discerning in general, could not but notice a difference in Lady Isabel's manners towards him from what it had once been; forgetting that when it was otherwise he had been a widower, and able by an offer of his

hand, to reward all the smiles and attentions for which now he could make no adequate recompense; but feeling, that whatever influenced her conduct, she who evidently disliked himself was no companion for his wife, and would be likely to insinuate into her mind the prejudices which rankled in her own. To separate them, however, was a matter of no small difficulty; the very mention of departure was discountenanced by the Earl and his sister; and Lady Glenallan felt far more inclined to listen to their entreaties for her remaining, than to her husband's to depart. Often was the day of going named, but never adhered to; and the Marquess at last, wearied with delay, took one morning the desperate resolution of announcing to his wife, before they left their apartment, that she must give orders to her woman for the putting up of her dresses, as in two or three hours they should leave Arabin Castle. At first, her Ladyship affected to misunderstand

his command, and begged a repetition of it ; but when it was rendered comprehensive to her understanding, that Lord Glenallan had indeed made arrangements for their departure without consulting her, and was determined, as he declared, on their execution, words were inadequate to vent, looks to express her rage. Regardless of propriety, she gave way to all the ill-will she had for some time past felt for her husband, and upbraided him in language more violent than the Marquess had ever before heard from the lips of any lady, indeed of any woman, and in such as he had little, very little, expected ever to have heard from the *beautiful* ones of Georgiana. Terrified by the fear of her injuring herself, into every concession, the Marquess weakly consented to give up his intention, and endeavoured by a thousand promises of future gratification and indulgence to pacify the storm, which he was as fearful of

coming to the ears of others, as Georgiana was regardless : and after a scene which totally undeceived him in any delusion he might hitherto have entertained with regard to her amiability, left her to give orders for the postponement of their journey, thinking by this means to procure peace, though not pleasure. But he was mistaken in believing that with submission his annoyances would end, and surprised when Lady Glenallan entered the breakfast-room (where he was standing with Lord Arabin), in her pelisse and bonnet. After the usual salutations had taken place between the latter and the Marchioness, her husband, as if to ward off any apparent supposition of alteration in their plans, cheerfully exclaimed—

“ Well ! Georgiana, I ’ve been telling the Earl that you and Lady Isabel cannot part at such short notice as I had designed, and he is very angry that I should have thought of it.”

“ You are mistaken, my Lord,” replied Lady Glenallan, haughtily ; “ I shall depart immediately after breakfast. To your kindness, Lord Arabin,” she added, turning to the latter, “ and that of Lady Isabel, I am indebted for all the happiness I have enjoyed while here ; and it has been great, very great ; to Lord Glenallan,” she continued with a contemptuous glance—“ for any alloys it may have had.”

Confused and surprized at such an ungenerous and public avowal of her sentiments, the Marquess could only stammer out his incapability of understanding her and the humour she was in that morning. With malicious triumph, the Marchioness expressed a hope that Lord Arabin was not similarly at a loss ; and the latter, somewhat annoyed at being involved in such an unpleasant altercation, could only hope he understood Lady Glenallan rightly,

when she professed herself as having been happy while at Arabin Castle.

“Happy, too happy,” said the Marchioness, suddenly bursting into tears, and throwing herself on the sofa, “not to dread the contrast which will ensue.”

Sick of such a scene, the Marquess snatched up his hat and left the room ; while Lord Arabin threw himself on the sofa beside Lady Glenallan, and comforting her with the fondness of a lover, not admonishing her with the sincerity of a friend, obtained from her a full confession of all that had passed between herself and the Marquess. Far different, however, were the sentiments which such a relation inspired, from what she imagined or he expressed. While the Marchioness supposed he was admiring her and her spirit, he was pitying Lord Glenallan ; “Poor, deluded man !” thought he ; “is this the creature on whom you have la-

vished your fortune, to whom you have sacrificed yourself?"

But it was not in the utterance of such sentiments he was interrupted by Lady Isabel. No; it was in those of the tenderest sympathy, the most devoted admiration; it was in paying her compliments, the highest man could pay woman.

"Isabel," said the Earl, after she had spoken to the Marchioness, "Lady Glenallan has this morning received her first lesson in matrimonial duties, and she finds it very hard to be learnt."

"You are mistaken, my Lord," observed the Marchioness, raising her splendid eyes to his; "this is not the first time in which the Marquess has reminded me I am no longer my own mistress."

"I suspect it will be the last," said the Earl, with a meaning smile.

"Does the man exist," feelingly inquired

Lady Isabel, as she hung over her friend ;
“ who having caused, could leave another to
chase those beautiful tears !”

“ He exists in Lord Glenallan !” returned
the Marchioness, in a melancholy tone ; “ he
exists in the man who will shortly deprive me
of your society. Oh ! Isabel, how often shall
I think of you, and of the happy days I have
spent at Arabin Castle !”

“ Tell me, Lady Glenallan,” said the Earl,
taking her hand ; “ when you think of Isabel,
will you not think of her brother also ? Will
you not believe him equally ambitious of your
regard, though she only has been happy
enough to inspire it ?”

“ Say not so, Lord Arabin,” returned the
Marchioness, blushing ; “ both have inspired
it ; both will occupy my thoughts—I fear, to
the exclusion of every thing else ; but to Lady
Isabel I may profess what to you I dare not.”

Breakfast was now prepared, to which the

Earl went, to summon Lord Glenallan: and about an hour after it, the travelling carriage was at the door, and Lady Isabel hanging about her friend, inconsolable, as it would seem, at their parting.

“Are these professions of friendship to be continued by correspondence?” inquired her brother.

Lady Isabel made no reply.

But the Marchioness, as he handed her to the carriage, observed, “*Professions*, Lord Arabin, we are told are of *this world*; and therefore I will not profane our friendship by making any to your sister; but hope my actions will one day prove what at present my heart can only feel.”

“Farewell, dear, lovely Lady Glenallan!” said he, “I wish I was leaving you with one better capable of appreciating your value.”

These were nearly the last words of Lord Arabin, and those of his sister were something

similar. How different were the exclamations of both when the carriage drove off, and they re-entered the Castle !

“ Well !” cried Lady Isabel, “ I have earned for myself a winter in London, with the most beautiful the Marchioness of Glenallan. What have your languishing looks and dulcet tones effected, Edward ?”

“ Only the making her Ladyship delightfully discontented with the best of husbands ; and willing, I believe, to sacrifice him at any moment for the most faithless of men,” returned the Earl.

“ For the one, then, whom I have the honour to call my brother,” returned Lady Isabel ; “ but whom, just at present, I shall call my servant, and request to order our horses, that we may ride away our uncommon grief.”

CHAPTER X.

“ Our pleasures are born but to die,
They are link'd to our hearts but to sever,
And like stars shooting down a dark sky,
Seem brightest when falling for ever.”

From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.

Hermitage, &c.

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

To *you*, hitherto the kind sympathizer in my pleasures, I now turn for consolation in my sorrow. In a sorrow which, if it continue to affect me as it has hitherto done, will quit me soon, and with life. I this day week took leave of De Meurville, of him who has been to me at once a lover and a friend ; whose affection

has heightened my enjoyments, while his advice corrected their influence. We left him, as you know, about three months ago in London, which we quitted a short time after Charlotte's marriage, detained there in a diplomatic situation from the Austrian Court, but little thinking we should not see him again till he came to bid us a final farewell. However, so it was to be, and Hermitage, once the scene of all my joy, is now the witness of all my woe. It was seated under one of its shady trees, I was surprized by the appearance of De Meurville, who pale, and apparently tired and sorrowful, exclaimed, as he approached, "Agnes, I am come to bid you farewell!" Involuntarily I sank on the seat from which I had risen at his appearance, and listened in motionless silence, while he explained to me in a hurried tone, that he had received a communication from the Emperor, which required his immediate return to Germany. For what, or for how long, he

appeared either to have forgotten or not heard. In fact, he seemed only to remember he was leaving me ! and in that idea to have lost every other. Of my grief, at least, from what I have expressed, you may form some idea, but of his you never can. Wildly he threw his arms around me, implored me to think of him, to love him, when he was far distant, to believe him true till I beheld him false ! to listen not to what was said against him by others, till conviction proved it. “ They will tell you,” said he, that I am married—that I shall never return to England—that you are credulous, and never man was true ; but believe them not, Agnes, believe them not—’tis I who ask it !”

“ My De Meurville,” said I, “ of whom is it that you expect such conduct ? Who can you suppose would be interested in giving me information, which you only know would have power to afflict me ?”

Others will suspect it would, be assured,”

said he, “ and report will whisper it—wishes will circulate it—envy will acquaint you with it. You will be surrounded with lovers contending for your affections, friends solicitous for their success, and I shall have no advocate to plead my cause.”

“ Will you not have an advocate in my heart, Clifford !” interrupted I: “ one whose pleadings will prevent my listening to those of any other, in the hope that love and honour may one day be reconciled, and sanction yours.”

“ Ah, Agnes !” said he, sinking at my feet, “ that heart will be silenced, indeed, every thing but corrupted. You know not now what you may hereafter become, and you do not, cannot know, how wretched the prospect of the future makes me.”

“ What can I do ? what can I say,” cried I, “ to render it otherwise ?”

“ You can,” said he, after a momentary

pause, “do that which will dissipate every doubt, say that which will still every anxiety; you can give me this hand! you can pledge me this heart! you can call me, your De Meurville, your husband! The delay of a few hours here will be of no consequence to me, and during these, we may find a few minutes for the performance of a ceremony, which the chaplain attached to your father’s household would, I am convinced, go through.”

“Oh! De Meurville,” said I, “what a part would you induce me to act. Do you imagine I could ever know peace, after deceiving my parents, sullyng your honour, destroying Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe’s happiness!”

“Her happiness,” repeated he, contemptuously, “that source of remorse, at least, you would not have.”

“When I am convinced,” said I, “by her marriage with another, that it is independent of

you, then you shall be my De Meurville—my husband—but not till then.”

He used, as you may imagine, all the eloquence of love to induce me to change my resolution, to silence my conscience, and his own; and if any one's eloquence would have succeeded, it would have been his. Even now, when I recollect it, enforced with such fondness, brightened with such anticipations, urged in such despair, I wonder I could have resisted it. How great must have been its power then, but fortunately there was within me a something greater still, and I did resist it. Instead of himself, I accepted his picture; which he had had purposely taken for me, and would not hear of my refusing.

“O that I could think,” said he, as he placed it round my neck, “that the time would ever come, in which the husband's fondness would add value to the lover's gift; but I have a pre-

sentiment that it never will, that we shall never meet again!"

"Never, De Meurville! that word comprehends both time and eternity; and if we meet not here, I trust we shall hereafter."

"Talk not of an hereafter, Agnes," said he, wildly, "to which I shall have no guide; of a Heaven which I shall never reach, unless from you I learn the way."

"Why will you speak thus?" remonstrated I. "What avails reason if it is thus to be rejected; and what is woman that she should supplant it?"

"Woman is to man," said he, "a dearer, gentler guide than reason; one less exacting, less frigid, more influential, more fond." I was overcome by the melancholy expression which accompanied these words; and the idea that De Meurville might ever err for want of such a guide, almost made me repent having refused to become such, as far as I was capable to him.

Fortunately he did not observe my resolution waver, had he done so, all would have been over; but my face was averted, and his concealed as he leant on me. I told him that I would write to him; and that idea seemed to comfort him; that I should consider hearing from him my greatest consolation, and that the letter which announced his return to England and to me, released from his present engagement, would be the most acceptable I could ever receive. But if the fulfilment of the latter was unavoidable, I would endeavour to hear, with satisfaction, that he had sacrificed love to duty, being better able to bear a loss which would preserve his honour, than a love which would involve its disgrace. After having reasoned him not into contentment with his fate, but into submission to it, I intreated him to leave me. He had already bid adieu to the rest, alleging anxiety to return immediately to town; and if his long stay with me were discovered, it would

create suspicion ; besides, every delay was increasing his sorrow, and I wanted solitude to give vent to mine which I had hitherto to a degree repressed. How often did he bid me adieu, and return to repeat it once more ; how often clasp me to his heart, and call me his beloved Agnes. With what emotion did he press my hand when, for the last time, it lingered in his ; with what agony tear himself finally from my presence. What I felt at his departure I cannot describe to you ; I could not weep, I could not speak ; I stood motionless on the spot on which he had left me, with a feeling nearer approaching to suffocation than any other. My eyes were wearied with looking down the path he went, my head was giddy, and every thing appeared in confusion around me. But soon my stupefaction left me, and, bursting into tears, I wildly followed the walk he had pursued. Fortunately, it was a retired one, and no person met me ; had any one, they would

have thought me mad. I called Clifford De Meurville in vain, nothing but echo answered to my voice. I would have given the world to have seen him yet once again—once more to have felt his embrace—once more to have beheld his eyes imploring truth from mine. But why should I recall moments so wretched, so intensely wretched, as those which succeeded his departure, their poignancy is still too bitter not to render the retrospection maddening. Had I possessed power at the time, I could have written you a few lines to implore you, if you could see De Meurville, to console him, to cheer him, to tell him of your own confidence in my affection, and thus to have encouraged him; but I was incapable of any such effort, and, on reflection, I am sure it would have been unnecessary. If you saw him, your own heart would suggest better than I could dictate; if you did not, my request would have been unavailing. I must now conclude this long letter, for the dul-

ness of which I shall not apologize, as, if I could be in any thing like spirits now, I should not be worthy of the name of your friend, of the sincerity of your friendship, or of being De Meurville's Agnes.

I am, &c. &c.

P. S. Our house is, as usual, filled with company, at present chiefly gentlemen, among whom gaming is the order of the day, which induces later hours and more noise than is at all agreeable to us females; in short, it promises to be a very different summer from the last; but perhaps no summer will ever again resemble that to me. If it were not from the dread of missing De Meurville's letters, which, directed to a feigned name, are to be left for me at the post-office near here, I think I should accept Mr. and Mrs. Damer's invitation to Son-grove, as I fear my woe-begone looks will soon be traced to their real source; at present they are supposed to proceed from my recent

dissipations at Weymouth, and regret for their loss. The Russels are still in France. Charlotte writes me word she hates her husband. What a confession for a bride!

CHAPTER XI.

“’Tis past ! the veil is torn away
That hid the idol from my sight,
And mocking reason’s sober ray,
Enfolded thee in fairy light.”

AFTER leaving Arabin Castle, Lord and Lady Glenallan returned to Brighton, he to endeavour to please his Lady, she to please herself. With change of residence the Marquess hoped for a change in Georgiana’s manners towards him, but in this he was disappointed, and a coldness, which the slightest provocation irritated into passion, though the most unbounded tenderness could not soften into love, continued, as when at Lord Arabin’s, their general characteristic. Previous to this hated visit, though she had frequently shocked and surprized him by the indul-

gence of a violent spirit, she had not wounded him by a systematic indifference; and rendered miserable by such conduct, the Marquess, to discover its source, was betrayed into an action which perhaps no circumstances could justify, and which increased the evil it developed the source of. Preparing one evening to peruse a book which he brought down from the Marchioness's boudoir, after she, in company with another lady, had gone to a concert, he was surprized by the falling of a letter from it; and on examining the direction, which was to the Marchioness of Glenallan, discovered it to be from Lady Isabel Ireton. Prompted by irresistible curiosity to satisfy himself whether he was right in the suspicions he had long entertained of the counsels of this lady undermining his peace, he opened the epistle, whose length and hand-writing would have certified it, without farther evidence, to be the production of a lady. By the commencing sentence, which congratulated

her on her safe arrival at Brighton, he discovered the letter to have been written about a month before, in answer to one Lady Glenallan had dispatched immediately after her coming to that place. It proceeded thus: "How my brother and I laughed over your description of the journey; how well we could imagine your agreeable Lord poring over an old newspaper in one corner of the carriage, while you fell asleep in the other, dreaming, as you was kind enough to say, of Edward and of me."

"Ungrateful Georgiana!" involuntarily exclaimed the Marquess, as he drew a candle nearer to him, and lost all the scruples he had hitherto felt in reading the letter. "Is this the recompense for all the attentions I showed you during that journey? for my forbearance in not resenting unkindness from you, which any other man would have made you repent of for years afterwards." But he went on.

"You cannot conceive, my dearest Lady

Glenallan, for, notwithstanding your desire, I cannot call one, so much my superior in every thing but years, Georgiana; how wretched my brother has been ever since your departure; he literally thinks of nothing but you. Not a book but recalls—may I write it?—your dear image. Not a ride, not a walk do we take, but those which were favourites with you. Not a subject is started, but has a reference to you. In me he knows too well he has a delighted listener, not to be lavish of the theme when we are together: and could you hear him—could you hear with what rapture he speaks of you—with what penetration he discovers the most trifling thing that has been performed by you, whether it be a song you have copied, a landscape you have sketched, or any thing which you have touched.”

“And what is all this to her? to my wife?” exclaimed the Marquess passionately, as, without patience regularly to read, he ran over the remainder—instances of Lord Arabin’s remembrance,

admiration, &c., &c., till he came to a passage, in which his own name caught his eye. "I hope," it began, "that you do not forget my advice, that you do not forget to remind Lord Glenallan a thousand times a day of his happiness in possessing so lovely and beautiful a wife: it is the only way, my charming friend, for men are of all beings most ungrateful, and require perpetually to be reminded of what they enjoy. Let not the natural amiability of your disposition lead you to be over obliged for any thing he does for you; 'tis for your happiness, and to promote the continuance of his attentions, I advise it; for once too grateful for his gifts and he will think he has been too generous in lavishing them, however mistaken he would be in such a supposition, for could he give you the wealth of the world, it would be no compensation for the blessings you bestowed on him when you gave him yourself. Oh, Lady Glenallan! if adverse fate had not thrown him and

his thousands in your way at the moment it did —when, as you once described it to me, India was yawning for your reception on one side, every thing that was disagreeable your alternative on the other, you would never have fallen to the lot of one so little capable of appreciating you. No, you would now be the cherished idol of some man very different from Lord Glenallan! You would be listening to love and adoration from lips more persuasive than his.”

“Cruel, unkind suggestions!” said the Marquess, throwing down the open letter on the table. “It is you, then, my Lady Isabel, I may thank for all Georgiana’s unkindness. My thousands might indeed have been better bestowed than on one who allows you to speak thus of me—than on one, who, while she is enjoying all the luxuries they can purchase, despises their possessor.” Again he took up the letter, and his miseries were completed, when, on looking at the conclusion, he discerned a few lines from Lord

Arabin himself. Previous to which Lady Isabel had written—"My brother is just come in; he is quite angry that I did not acquaint him with my intention of writing to you, but I knew if I had I should not have been able to have written it in peace. He would have been at my elbow with, 'Tell her this, and remind her of that;' so I gave him no intimation; however, you will not escape his Lordship; he insists on informing you himself, with regard to the culture of the American plants he gave you the evening before you left, and is impatient to take the pen out of my hand, so adieu, &c., &c."

The Earl commenced with, "My dear Lady Glenallan," and after apologizing for thus addressing her, proceeded to give her a few directions about the rearing of the flowers, which he had learnt that morning from his gardener, and which the latter having been away some time before, prevented him from earlier obtaining; but the far greater part of the

space in which he wrote was filled with insinuations, allusions, &c., which the Marquess was at a loss exactly to understand, not having been admitted into that free-masonry of looks and words which had been established by the trio at Arabin Castle. Engaged, however, in puzzling out the meaning of his Lordship, he was startled by the opening of the door, and thunderstruck, when the person who approached, and in a moment stood before him, was—Lady Glenallan!

“I did not expect—you—so—soon,” stammered out the Marquess, in some confusion.

“So it would seem,” observed her Ladyship, who, white as the pearls, of which a profusion adorned her dress, fixed her eyes with mortifying composure on the letter he was half-folding, half-rumpling up; “but I became so faint, I could not stay out the concert.”

“You look very pale,” said her lord.

“Really,” cried Lady Glenallan, sharply, “I

am afraid my entrance was very mal-apropos ; I certainly interrupted you in the perusal of some fair correspondent's letter."

"Fair !" repeated the Marquess, and overcome with confusion the letter fell from his hands.

With an expression at once playful and malicious the Marchioness caught it up ; in an agony her lord demanded its restoration.

"Don't be afraid," said she, eluding his efforts to gain it ; "I shan't read it."

"Don't look at it—don't, even at the direction, I implore you," cried the Marquess.

But it was too late, her eyes were fixed upon it, and she exclaimed, "Why this is to me, my Lord ! How came it in your possession ?" And on examining it more closely, and perceiving it was franked by Lord Arabin—"Is it possible, Lord Glenallan," she continued, "is it possible that you have really been reading this letter to me from Lady Isabel Ireton ? Well indeed

might you be alarmed at my entrance, when it was thus you were engaged. What confidence can I in future have in one who has descended to such a meanness—a meanness which, if it had been to preserve my life, I could not have been guilty of.” Thus the Marchioness continued her indignation, increasing with every word, and at last, by its violence, rousing Lord Glenallan’s.

“Perhaps, Georgiana,” said he, “if you found your dearest interests undermining—if you found yourself losing affections which you had done all in your power to gain, and suspected the cause—you, too, might have been betrayed into the only method of convincing yourself.”

“Never!” returned Lady Glenallan, scornfully; “I should never prize affections of which any investigation could prove the falsity.”

“You talk like a high-spirited woman, Georgiana,” said the Marquess; “I feel like a husband disappointed where he has placed his

most sanguine hopes; wounded by her on whom he had fixed his fondest affections; despised and ridiculed, where it has been his greatest study to please and to oblige."

" 'Tis idle talking, my lord," furiously interrupted the Marchioness; "I have convicted you in an action which your footman would have scorned to have been guilty of, which will for ever lessen you in my estimation—which will for ever make me suspicious of you; and which induces me to wish, heartily to wish, that that letter had disclosed something worse to you than it can have done."

"What could it have disclosed worse," asked the Marquess, with a deep-drawn sigh, "than that I have bestowed my affections on one totally unworthy of them—on one, who after being but six months married—"

The Marchioness interrupted him—"The fact is, Lord Glenallan, you are jealous of the Earl of Arabin. I saw it from the first day

we were at the Castle, and so did Lady Isabel, so did the Earl himself, and we laughed at such nonsense."

"You were very obliging," observed the Marquess, bitterly.

"Yes; we laughed at it," continued her Ladyship; "not that Lord Arabin was so insignificant a rival, but that you had so little confidence in your wife, so poor an opinion of yourself."

"I have had too much confidence in my wife," said Lord Glenallan. "I have given her credit for being better and wiser than I now fear she is; I have considered her worthy of love and esteem which she deserved not to inspire."

"Spare your eloquence!" cried Lady Glenallan, "I am not to be taught by you, or by any one my conduct. You do not now address the meek, tame-spirited creature who, from what one hears, would have hid her face from man or woman either to oblige you."

“Georgiana !” vociferated the Marquess, exasperated by so unfeeling an allusion to his late wife ; “you may insult me, but you shall not her, who was as superior to you in amiability, in gentleness, in all that inspires love and regard, as it is possible for one woman to be to another !”

“You are certainly quite inspired,” returned Lady Glenallan, contemptuously ; “and form a most ludicrous contrast to the dumb, terrified person you were but a few minutes ago. I am sure I wish your conscience would have similarly harangued you when you were presuming to open my letter.”

“Cease ! in mercy cease !” cried her unhappy husband.

“I’ll not cease ; I’ll not have mercy,” returned the Marchioness ; “you showed none for my feelings when you committed so ungentlemanly an action, and I have none for yours. What was Lady Isabel’s correspondence with

me, to you, that you should pry into it. Fortunately," continued her Ladyship, "or perhaps unfortunately, for your gratification, she is an angel! and wrote nothing that angels might not have seen; but it might have been otherwise."

"Lady Isabel is a devil incarnate," said the Marquess; "one who would wish to betray you, and render me miserable! In the latter," added he, in a melancholy tone, "she has nearly succeeded."

"I'll not stay," cried the Marchioness, ringing the bell violently, "to hear my best friend abused! No; I'll leave you, Lord Glenallan; I'll go any where, to any place, which is the farthest from you."

"Go to your angel, Isabel," said he, sneeringly; "go to Lord Arabin, and tell him that I now know the value of her friendship and his."

"I'll not bear this! I'll not bear it!" said the Marchioness, almost screaming with passion,

and scarcely able to command herself to give orders for the carriage when the servant entered.

“What would you do? are you mad?” inquired the Marquess, after the footman had shut the door.

“No; I’m not mad,” returned Lady Glenallan; “were I so, I would remain here, I would remain with you, I would expose myself to your cruelty.”

“Cruelty!” repeated her Lord; “pervert not terms; talk not of what you never knew. Oh! Georgiana,” he was continuing, when interrupted by her bursting into a flood of tears, the customary conclusion to her storms of temper, and, unfortunately, the usual dissipators of all Lord Glenallan’s anger, for the sight of them made him forget her unkindness, her heartlessness, her ingratitude; and remember only her youth, her beauty, her dependence on him for

love and protection ; and he took her to his arms, he implored her forgiveness for any thing he had said unkind, and but a promise that she would endeavour to behave to him as she had once done.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Some few there are, of sordid mould,
Who barter youth and bloom for gold;
Careless with what or whom they mate—
Their ruling passion all for state.”

HERMITAGE did not present this summer, as the last, an assembly of refined society and succession of elegant amusements; for the marriage of Charlotte had thrown the family under a cloud, from which they had not yet been emancipated, and the style of people who would have formed the one, and contributed to the others, were those who had now become shy of their acquaintance. Women of delicacy dreaded contagion; men of fortune feared ensnarement;

and the Mandevilles, to escape the mortification of being quite deserted, had to collect about them those to whom they were quite indifferent, and from whom they could derive no consequence, with one exception, in the person of the Earl of Ossulton. This nobleman, to whose parsimony they were indebted for his making their house an hotel, during a stay in Surrey which had been necessitated by business, could not be indifferent to them when he had a hand and coronet to offer; and Lady Mandeville already anticipated the stigma incurred by Mrs. Russell's marriage, lost in the splendour of the Countess of Ossulton's. But no such brilliant connexion would have retrieved their fame, had not the Earl, during his stay at Hermitage, which lasted nearly two months, become extremely involved by play; and, averse to liquidating the debts he had contracted as unable decently to leave the house until he had done so, it was indirectly hinted by Sir Wil-

liam, at the suggestion of his wife, that all his embarrassments should be removed by the former, if his Lordship could suggest any adequate compensation for the conference of such a benefit. The latter, grateful for the proposal, made liberal offers of patronage for the sons; but Sir William, instructed by his lady, declined that mode of recompense, and pronounced them as already secure, through different channels, of advancement in their respective pursuits. His Lordship then made other advantageous proffers of his influence, his exertions, and all that he could command in short, but his fortune and himself. A sacrifice of the latter indeed had never occurred to him; and when broad hints from Lady Mandeville—who, in a negotiation she undertook with him, was unrestrained by any of the scruples of delicacy which had deterred the Baronet from pushing too closely towards the desired point—suggest-

ed to his mind, for the first time, this method of retribution, he was equally confounded and undetermined: confounded evidently at such an idea having occurred to them when it had never occurred to himself, and undetermined as to the realizing of it. Totally devoid of feeling, and in this instance of respect, no necessity of inspiring or creating affection troubled Lord Ossulton; and in contemplating Madelina and Agnes—which he did with more attention after his conversation with their mother, he was only divided as to which he should select—if he honoured either with his hand. The latter he thought a pretty girl; but of the former, who appeared to him dying in a consumption, he suspected he should have a shorter lease; and therefore, after some deliberation, determined on taking her for better or worse, as the most promising speculation. With what different feelings were his offers made and received! made as the only alterna-

tive to release him from debts which he had no inclination to pay, and with a resolution to disappoint the woman who anticipated any pleasures from their acceptance; received, as the delightful prelude to every future gratification and triumph, as the forerunner of an elevation which would enable her to patronize or annihilate by a look, those whom she had hitherto courted. Miss Mandeville now found herself placed, in reality, in the enviable situation she had often experienced in imagination, and able, as she believed, to realize all the charming visions of which that imagination had been so prolific. An immediate order on the first dress-maker in London for the preparation of the most beautiful dresses, and on the first carriage-maker for the turning out of the most elegant curricie, would, she thought, be the trifling though agreeable preliminaries to the whole family going up to town; when she reckoned on selecting her barouche, sit-

ting for her picture, choosing her diamonds, and becoming, by the hand of a bishop and aid of a special license, Countess of Osulton.

These were the expectations of Miss Mandeville: but somewhat different were the determinations of her future lord; he perfectly foresaw, from the vanity and thoughtlessness which characterized the family, the desire they would entertain of indulging in a great expense and display on the occasion, by which he would most likely suffer; and therefore resolved on announcing a necessity for his returning to Osulton Park immediately after his marriage, which would frustrate their capability of doing so. Once there, he was aware that his Countess would be as isolated from society and any possible means of dissipation, as if she were transported into the heart of India, or wilds of America; for it was situated in a remote part of Northumberland, and at the distance of many

miles from any residence ; an effectual barrier to intercourse, even if there had not been any other : but there was one still more efficient in the savage temper of the Earl, who was detested by everyone, unfortunate enough to have intercourse with him. Never did vanity receive a greater mortification than Miss Mandeville's when his Lordship acquainted her with his intentions. When, instead of several weeks, she heard she was only to spend two or three days in London, and that as he had made arrangements for their being married in the country, and proceeding immediately after it to the North, it would be quite unnecessary for any of her family to accompany them to town. Madelina felt little inclined to conform to plans made with such uncereemonious indifference to her inclinations, and would probably have rebelled against their execution, had not her more politic mother advised her compliance, and held out to her the flattering, though unfounded idea, that she

would spend the winter in London, and that Ossulton Park was most probably surrounded with an excellent neighbourhood, among whom she would introduce the latest fashions, and be a person of the highest consequence; in short, Lady Mandeville's eloquence, at last, reconciled her daughter to the present fall of the splendid fabric she had built. But she determined to be the star of the North, till, like the sun, she could rise with glory in the East, where next winter she anticipated being the Lady Glenallan of last, and exciting herself, all the interest, admiration, and envy the latter had so amply created. So that after all her own expectations, and those of others, she was married very quietly at Hermitage, and set off immediately after it, in a plain travelling chariot for London. During their stay at the latter, they were obliged to stop at an hotel, the Earl having no town house, and that of the Mandevilles being let during the summer. The Countess was visited by all her

acquaintance, and nothing could be pleasanter to her than the few days of her residence in London. Dressed in the most elegant manner, she had only to sit at home for the reception of visitors, or drive abroad for her amusement. Engaged in the latter, a day or two after her arrival in town, she met Mr. Damer; he had ever been an admirer of hers, and she, conscious of it, always felt that desire to look pleasing before him, which we invariably do in presence of those on whom we suspect we to have made a favourable impression. Every thing confirmed Lady Ossulton's doing it, at the moment she was recognized by Mr. Damer: her dress was becoming—a splendid shawl fell over the morning robe, and drooping chantilly and blossoming wild flowers hung about her bonnet, while her face and figure expressed compassion she felt for a poor woman, whom she had just been relieving.

“ Allow,” cried Mr. Damer, as he held up his hand to the carriage; “ allow one of the earliest and warmest friends of Miss Mandeville, to congratulate the Countess of Ossulton.”

“ Is it possible I see you, Charles !” said the latter, with animation; “ how are you, and how is Caroline and her baby ?”

“ Oh, quite well, perfectly well, I thank you : but how are you and the Earl, and how did you leave them at Hermitage ?”

“ I am quite well,” returned she ; “ London always agrees with me ; and as for Lord Ossulton, I can scarcely tell you how he is. His Lordship is so ungallant a bridegroom, as to leave me alone from morning till night. But at Hermitage, they were all quite well when I left them, and desired a thousand remembrances to you and Carey.”

“ Have you been long in town ?” inquired Mr. Damer.

“ Oh no ! not more than two or three days,”

replied the Countess ; “ and I am, as you may imagine, quite in a hurry to leave it. We shall set out for Ossulton at the beginning of next week ; it is quite gothic being in London at this season.”

“ Gothic or not,” replied Mr. Damer, “ I’d rather see you here than in Northumberland, whose chill blasts will, I fear, ill agree with so fair a flower.”

“ Oh ! the flower’s not so delicate !” said she, laughing, “ but it will bear transplantation very well ; and, perhaps, acquire hardihood from the change.”

“ I hope so,” returned Mr. Damer ; “ but tell me, Lady Ossulton, did you hear from the Russells lately ? are they quite well ?”

“ I heard from Charlotte a few days since,” said she ; “ who mentions that she and her husband will be returning shortly to England.”

“ And that she hourly discovers new attractions in him, I suppose ?” added Mr. Damer.

“No, she doesn’t say that,” returned the Countess, with a meaning smile.

And after a little more desultory conversation, and a promise that Mr. Damer should call on the Countess next day, he wished her good morning, and returned home; where, to the great mortification of his wife, he raved of nothing but Lady Ossulton. “She is certainly very pretty,” said he, as sitting after dinner, he was fiddling with some fruit,—Mrs. Damer playing with her child; “and never looked better than to-day, she dresses so well—with such elegance and suitability!”

“What did she wear?” inquired Mrs. Damer; endeavouring to appear interested about a subject on which she was quite indifferent, or perhaps worse.

“Oh! I don’t know, I’m no adept in ladies’ dresses,” returned her husband; “but it was something very becoming—lilac—or pink—or what you call French white, I think,

her bonnet was made of; and then there was some light flowers, May, or apple-blossoms, or something or other, falling and twining about it: it had a very good effect altogether."

"I dare say!" said Mrs. Damer.

"And then," continued he, "it wasn't so much her dress that struck me, but the amiability of her appearance. There she was performing an act of charity and listening to a tiresome beggar-woman; when in the shop opposite which she was stopping, there was a group of gentlemen, among whom, any other pretty woman would like to have made her *entrée*, and been playing off all manner of airs."

Mrs. Damer secretly smiled at her husband's credulity, in supposing that Lady Ossulton was not perfectly aware of which proceeding would be most likely to ensure admiration; and could scarcely hear him assert, with patience, that he believed her very indifferent to it.

“Madelina,” said he, “has a great deal of sense, and is convinced, as she has often told me, of the inutility of admiration to contribute to happiness.”

“She has received enough, certainly,” replied Mrs. Damer, “to enable her to determine the point.”

“Now I think of it,” said Mr. Damer, laughing, “you and she were not very good friends; but I hope,” he added, in a more serious tone, “that it will not be the case any longer, for I assure you, you would be rather singular in disliking a person who pleases every one else; and that when you call on her to-morrow, you will prove yourself, by your manner, to have overcome any little feelings of jealousy or envy; which I cannot help thinking were the foundations of your dislike to her.”

Mrs. Damer disclaimed it being the case.

“Even if it were,” continued her husband,

“there were many allowances to be made. You saw her at Hermitage, as an elegant and accomplished girl, receiving attentions and admiration superior to yourself; and which, though indeed,” he inserted in a flattering tone, “the case is different now, you had not then similar reasons to expect : for though you were a bride, and in my eyes a beauty, you had not that happy manner, and appearance of amiability, which distinguished her.”

“How much,” involuntarily exclaimed Mrs. Damer, “has she gained by appearances, and I lost !”

“Why, the fact is, Caroline,” said her husband, “appearances must ever be added to realities, or the existence of the latter will be doubted.”

“I have reason to know that,” returned his wife.

“And I think have improved by the know-

ledge," said Mr. Damer. " You now unite the one to the other, and I flatter myself, that whatever might once have been the case, my wife and the Countess of Ossulton would now be equally objects of admiration."

CHAPTER XIII.

“ She came, she is gone, we have met,
To meet perhaps never again ;
The sun of that moment is set,
And seems to have risen in vain.”

COWPER.

THE vague hope which frequently induces our postponement of any unpleasant duty, namely, that something may interfere to prevent its execution, induced Mrs. Damer to delay her visit to the Countess of Ossulton ; which, in compliance with her husband's wishes, she had promised to make on the morning ensuing to that in which her Ladyship had been met by the latter, and till she actually stopped at the hotel and heard pronounced the unpleasing tidings ; “ That her Ladyship was at

home," she still indulged an idea of the probability of her being out, or ill, or something or other that should prevent her seeing her. But this announced, the steps let down, the footman prepared to usher her through the hall, there was no retention; and with as good a grace as possible, she made up her mind to enter the presence of the formidable Countess of Ossulton. Formidable indeed, only to Mrs. Damer, from the superiority with which imagination invested her; for could she have seen the mind and heart of her Ladyship, divested of the graces which rendered them imposing, she would have owned the one but frivolous, the other weak and wavering; and that it was manner alone, which gave an idea of the extent of her understanding, and the amiability of her feelings, though Mrs. Damer had always supposed the former great, and the latter excited by every one but herself. The Countess, engaged with a book, was half sitting, half re-

clining on the sofa when she entered, and her first glance was that of doubtful recognition; but her next seemed to certify her as to her knowledge of the person who entered, and with a mixture of haughtiness and condescension, but predominancy sufficient of the first, to prove Madelina Mandeville was not extinct in the Countess of Ossulton, she advanced to meet her friend.

“My dear Caroline,” she said, “I am delighted to see you; but really was for an instant at a loss to recognize you, disguised by such feathers and furbelows.”

Mrs. Damer smiled; “I can recognize you,” returned she, “notwithstanding a greater change; allow me to congratulate you on it.”

“I thank you,” said her Ladyship, with indescribable ease; “and believe I may return the congratulation, though for a different circumstance—namely, on your accouchement.

And indeed," added her Ladyship, with a heartless laugh, "it is a subject on which, if report speaks true, you merit congratulation, for I am told you were become the size of the house."

"I shall be anxious for you to see my child," said Mrs. Damer; "I think her very pretty."

"Oh, of course!" cried Lady Ossulton; "you would not be its mother if you did not; but of my seeing it there's no chance, for we leave town to-morrow."

"So soon!" said Mrs. Damer; "we had hoped you could dine with us."

"You are very good, very kind," returned the Countess, carelessly: "but talking of your child, is it possible you ventured so far without it? I had always pictured to myself that when you had a little baby, you would not stir a step unaccompanied by it; that if you were in the carriage, it and the nurse would be

surely perched in one corner ; and that if you walked, they 'd be at your elbow. By the bye, what is it called? some one told me it was named Madelina."

" No !" said Mrs. Damer, " if I had followed Charles's inclinations, it would have been ; but for once I pursued my own, and had it christened Jane, after my dear mother."

" Then I am sure," returned Lady Ossulton, " I am infinitely indebted to you and your mother, for having been the means of saving my name from profanation. I should hate to have a great fat nurse, calling a red-faced, squalling infant, ' Miss Maddy.' Excuse me Caroline : but all children are alike, and disgrace a pretty name as much as a pretty frock."

" Then what would be your plan?" inquired Mrs. Damer, " for children, you know, will, if they live, become men and women."

" Oh ! my plan," said the Countess, " is to give every child two names, and call it the ugly

one all its life, unless it bids fair to do justice to the pretty one ; for nothing can be more *outré* or ridiculous, than to see a person with a name to which they do no justice."

Mrs. Damer smiled.

" Tell me," said Lady Ossulton, " were you not surprized when you heard of my marriage ?"

" Indeed," commenced the other, in a hesitating tone—

" Indeed, you must have been," interrupted the Countess, " for I was surprized myself at it."

" I was more astonished," said Mrs. Damer, " to read in this morning's paper, of the marriage of Lord Clavers."

" Ah ! I saw it also," returned Lady Ossulton ; " but why should it surprize you ?"

" Because," said Mrs. Damer, " I thought him to have an attraction elsewhere, which he would not so easily overcome."

“ I don’t understand you,” observed the Countess.

“ Perhaps I should say,” returned Mrs. Damer; “ to have had an attraction for the loss of which nothing else could compensate.”

“ You still talk in enigmas,” said her Ladyship; “ am I to infer, that it is only to spare my blushes, and that it is to myself you are alluding all this time ?”

“ Why, yes,” returned Mrs. Damer; “ at Hermitage, you know, Lord Clavers used to admire you, apparently beyond any woman there.”

“ That was paying me a most special compliment, indeed,” said Lady Ossolton, laughing; “ when we had never a decent-looking woman stopping there. You would not surely have had him flirt with tall, ugly, Miss Backford; or poor, fat, good-humoured Mrs. Koppel, would you ?”

“ No; but—.”

“ Ah ! you are going to say I might have had a rival in my sister Agnes ; but no, not as far as regards Lord Clavers. She is very pretty and innocent, and all that ; and to an unsophisticated taste, would have been just the thing ; but that was not his Lordship’s ; and all her blushes and timidity, which another man would have delighted in, he admired less than assurance and repartee.”

Mrs. Damer smiled.

“ Now, my cousin De Meurville,” continued the Countess, “ appreciated that sort of thing. He thought with Dr. Gregory, that when a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the greatest charm of beauty !”

“ Apropos to the Count de Meurville,” Mrs. Damer was commencing, when interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Damer.

“ I hope, Charles,” cried the Countess, “ shaking hands with him, “ you are not come to run away with your wife ?”

“Why, Carey,” said he, “you have made your visit very late, or very long.”

“Not very long, I can answer for it,” returned Lady Ossulton; “whether it is very late, I don’t know, for I haven’t my watch here.”

“It’s just turned half past four by mine,” said Mr. Damer, “and I don’t like these autumnal afternoons for her being out,—they are very chilly.”

“You are a very thoughtful husband,” observed the Countess, smiling.

“What can I be expected to remember,” exclaimed he with animation, “if I forget Caroline!”

“I see,” said Lady Ossulton, while a shade of melancholy for a moment crossed her features, “that the idea of the wife being dearer than the bride, is not merely poetical.”

“From experience I can pronounce it not,” returned Mr. Damer.

“Oh, Charles!” continued her Ladyship, “if

Lord Ossulton proves such a husband to me as you have been to her, I shall be the best of wives and of women !”

“ From my soul I believe it !” returned he, emphatically.

“ I am sorry to hear,” observed Mrs. Damer, “ that Lady Ossulton is to leave town to-morrow.”

“ Yes ; I met her *Caro Sposo* just now, and he tells me that it’s a settled thing ; by the by, he ’ll be here directly ;”—and as he spoke the Earl entered.

“ Well, my Lord, what account of your carriage ? will it be ready by to-morrow ?” inquired Mr. Damer.

“ Oh ! by to-morrow to be sure,” returned his Lordship, gruffly ; “ but it was all that rascal’s fault that it wasn’t ready to-day, and we should have got on the first stage this evening.”

“ You are in a great hurry to leave,” said Mr. Damer, smiling.

“To be sure I am: what man in his senses would stop a day longer at a London hotel than was necessary? It is ruination, actually ruination!—but introduce me, if you please, to your lady.”

Mrs. Damer, the Earl of Ossulton—and Lord Ossulton, Mrs. Damer, was pronounced in a moment; and then Mr. Damer turned to the Countess, “Well, Madelina,” he said, “we must bid you farewell; but I hope it will not be very long before we have the pleasure of seeing you again.”

Mrs. Damer trusted the same; and the Earl muttered a request, “that if they should be passing through Northumberland, they would stop at Ossulton.” His lady seconded it; and after reiterated good wishes, Mr. and Mrs. Damer were taking a final leave, when it suddenly occurred to the former, that if asked, the Ossultons might dine with them that day; and delighted at having started the idea, he in-

stantly proposed their doing so. At first the usual impediments appropriated to such occasions were suggested on the part of the lady, "of dresses being packed up," "necessity of being early," &c.; and Mrs. Damer began to entertain hopes of her non-compliance; but Mr. Damer, most unnecessarily in his wife's opinion, so urged the point, stating it would be "quite in the family way," "no necessity for dressing," "and the Countess able to return at whatever hour she liked;" that to the unspeakable regret of Mrs. Damer, whose solicitations had been but faint, her Ladyship agreed, and with the Earl, who was very glad to be saved the expense of an hotel dinner, promised to be with them in little more than an hour.

During the drive home Mr. Damer was congratulating himself on having been lucky enough to think of the thing, and suggesting any additions that might be necessary to their

previously arranged dinner, for which two or three gentlemen were already invited; while Mrs. Damer, sickening at the thought of seeing more of Madelina, with whom she had hoped to have shaken hands for the last time in the morning, fell into something like a sullen reverie, confining herself to monosyllables, except when she remarked, which she did two or three times rather petulantly, that she supposed the Ossultons would keep them waiting till seven. Had it depended on Lady Ossulton, perhaps they might, but nothing now did: and when at a quarter before six her Lord desired her to put on her shawl and bonnet, for as it was a fine afternoon, and they were not dressed, it would answer to walk to Brook-street, she made no objection, but wrapping herself in an Indian shawl, and throwing a veil over her Leghorn bonnet, prepared to accompany him.

Mrs. Damer was standing at the window looking out for a carriage, when she saw them

cross the street, and instantly that slight agitation came over her, which the appearance of Lady Ossulton always created. She threw a glance around the room, to see that there was nothing likely to attract the keen satire of her Ladyship, and then, for the twentieth time, surveyed herself through a mirror, and began to fancy she was too much dressed, in which unpleasant truth she was confirmed by Lady Ossulton, who, merely attired herself in a coloured muslin richly flounced, exclaimed, as soon as she cast her eyes upon her—"Is it really for *me* you are so fine, Caroline, or do you sport this ball suit for Mr. Damer every day at dinner?"

Her Ladyship laughed as she spoke, but it was a laugh of mortifying contempt, and Mrs. Damer was glad to be spared answering by the entrance of her husband, and one of the gentlemen who had been invited. The others followed soon after.

Dinner passed off without any particular incident. Lady Ossulton, languid and affected, ate but little, while Mrs. Damer, fancying herself particularly watched and listened to by her Ladyship, felt a reserve and awkwardness, which was not lessened by the frown it occasioned on her husband's brow, or by the triumphant smile which played round the lips of the Countess, who could understand, though she had never felt such embarrassment. As long as it was possible, Mrs. Damer delayed making the move after dinner, anticipating the unpleasant *tête-à-tête* that would ensue, and perhaps might have done so longer, had not a significant glance from her husband reminded her of the incorrectness of such proceedings, and compelled her most unwillingly to bow to Lady Ossulton, who obeyed her signal for retiring with the ease and elegance of a princess.

Together in the drawing-room, and dependent on each other for amusement, it might

have been supposed that Lady Ossulton would a little descend from the chilling *hauteur* which had hitherto marked her manners; but if she did, it was to nothing more agreeable, and her vivacity was accompanied by an asperity the most unpleasant, as her silence had been marked by a listlessness the most mortifying. Standing at the fire-place, her Ladyship, after a pause, during which she had been stedfastly regarding her companion, observed—"You should never wear pink, Caroline; it is the most unbecoming colour possible to you, and at this moment, begging your pardon—we are friends, you know—you look worse than ever I saw you."

"Then I am afraid I must look very bad indeed," returned Mrs. Damer, reddening; "for in your eyes I know I never look well."

"You are mistaken," said the Countess; "and what is worse, angry." She added, in a coaxing tone, "When, if you reflect, I

should not have noticed your looking bad if it had been an habitual thing, but its not being so makes it remarkable."

"Oh! you are an accomplished flatterer," said Mrs. Damer, and she smiled; "but on me at least, flattery is thrown away."

"Don't imagine," returned the Countess, "I bestow any thing likely to meet with such an ungrateful recompense, and flattery of all things is that I am least lavish of; those who expect it from me are invariably disappointed. But what I was going to observe was, only you interrupted me, that pink is never a colour you should wear; every other would become you more, and in your old blue pelisse this morning, you looked infinitely better than in that pink body, though I can easily see it's new, and I believe fashionable."

"Well, let us talk of something more interesting than my looks," said Mrs. Damer, and

she would have turned the subject: but not so Lady Ossulton.

“Still the same humble personage as ever,” said her Ladyship, “fancying every thing of more consequence than herself, and wishing only to remain in obscurity! Well, Caroline! I admire but I can’t understand you.”

“At this moment I cannot you either,” said Mrs. Damer.

“And yet at this, or any other moment, it is very easy,” observed the Countess; “I am a matter-of-fact sort of personage, who say what I think, and think what I say; or rather, I am a woman who, acting from the impulses of her heart, too often forgets to pass them through the ordeal of her *reason*.”

Mrs. Damer, recollecting no instance in which Lady Ossulton’s enthusiasm had led her astray, did not sympathize with her on its excess, but cutting short the sentimental strain, asked her,

“What she thought of the apartments they had taken?”

“Oh, that nothing can be nicer,” returned her Ladyship, looking around. “And you have a piano, I see. Is that your own?”

Mrs. Damer replied in the affirmative; and Lady Ossulton crossed the room to open the instrument.

“Do you play much?” her Ladyship inquired, running over the keys.

“No! Charles hates music.”

“How unfortunate! and you play so well!” said the Countess, “far better than I do.”

“Oh, no!” returned Mrs. Damer, shaking her head.

“But oh, yes!” said the Countess, “you do a great deal; though you fancy me so superior in every thing.”

“I know you by this time too well, to have any thing left to fancy respecting you,” observed

Mrs. Damer, in rather a pointed tone, eluding as she spoke, the arch and penetrating eyes of Lady Ossulton.

“Do you?” returned the latter, “and do you give me credit for nothing more than is apparent? Is that quite fair, Caroline?”

“Is it otherwise?” replied Mrs. Damer: “may not all your attractions and graces be visible at a glance, while those of others are often concealed? Were I to make a simile, I should compare you to a diamond, cut, set, and polished, while many of my acquaintance, equally accomplished, equally beautiful, are diamonds from which you must rub some encumbering dross, and which want refining to strike with equal admiration.”

“You are really quite brilliant!” said the Countess, and she laughed: but instantly changing her tone, “Perhaps I am preventing your visiting your nursery,” she said, “and don’t let me, I beseech you. Bring the child down here, or

go up to it, whichever you like ; and don't mind me, I can amuse myself."

Glad of the permission, Mrs. Damer left her Ladyship for about a quarter of an hour, and at the end of that time, returned in company with little Jane, who was just pretty enough to be beautiful in a parent's eyes.

The gentlemen had entered the drawing-room, and time was, when to appear amiable before them Lady Ossulton would have played and fondled with the child, but that time was not the present, nor probably ever would be again, for the object was attained which alone had induced such amiable graces : and with her shawl wrapped round her, Lady Ossulton was now contemplating, with Mr. Damer, a picture of the beautiful Countess of Coventry, which hung at one end of the room, and which each allowed to resemble extremely the Marchioness of Glenallan.

" In all but expression," said Lady Ossulton,

“and that of Lady Glenallan is so peculiar, such a combination of artlessness and yet coquetry, of pride and yet desire to attract, as nothing, I believe, but her own crimson lips and splendid eyes could pourtray.”

“Yes, there’s a dissimilarity in the expression, which creates a difference,” said Mr. Damer; “but Lady Glenallan is, in my opinion, divine! By the bye,” he continued, and then hesitated, “where was it I last saw her?—Oh, I recollect now, at the Opera—at the Opera of *Semiramide*; and to be sure, she looked beautiful, beyond any thing I ever saw. It was not dress that added a charm, nor ornament a lustre; for the former was perfectly plain, and of the latter she had none: no, it was herself alone that shone, and shone so pre-eminently bright as to throw every thing else into the shade. Really, when I looked at her resplendent countenance, hanging with intense interest on the performance, I could not but think it profa-

nation, that Heaven should ever have placed her in such a world as this; that a creature like Lady Glenallan, should have to mingle with mankind in general !”

During this speech the Countess frequently bit her lips, and at the conclusion of it, remarked, with rather a contemptuous expression, “ That she believed the Marchioness of Glenallan had a few human passions, which served to keep her pretty much on a level with those to whom in other things she might be superior.”

“ Oh, to be sure she has !” returned Mr. Damer; “ with her supernatural beauty and accomplishments, she would not be mortal if she had not.”

“ Really the Marquess would have reason to be jealous, if he heard you rave so about his wife,” said the Countess.

“ No, he is too much accustomed to the thing.

Where could he meet the man who did not admire Lady Glenallan ?”

“ Ah ! but it is not every one who would express admiration in such warm terms. However, he is happy to have won the woman who wins all mankind ; and I hope he’ll never think he paid too dear for the distinction.”

“ Never, while Lady Glenallan looks so lovely !” cried Mr. Damer.

“ Never, certainly, *if* those lovely looks for ever beam on him ; but—” and she shook her head.

“ Oh they do ! depend upon it they do ! she must love the man who has made her all she is !”

“ She ought,” returned the Countess, suspiciously ; “ but see,” her Ladyship continued, moving towards the tea-table, “ here’s your quiet little wife has been waiting tea for us, most resignedly. What inattentive people we are !

Gentlemen, I admire your politeness ; Caroline, you really are the most patient creature in the world."

" Upon my life you are," said her husband.

" I should not suspect even the Glenallan to be more so."

" No, I should think not," observed Mr. Damer.

" And indeed, that she and your wife had very few dispositions in common."

" Perhaps you are not recommending me by that speech," said Mrs. Damer, smiling.

" If I am not," returned the Countess, " Charles does not deserve his good fortune in possessing you ; but I rather imagine I am, and that he has long learnt to appreciate your value."

" Is this Mocha," inquired Lord Ossulton, after tasting his coffee.

" For the credit of their economy, don't suppose it," said the Countess.

" Indeed it is not," said Mrs. Damer ; " but

I am glad it's good enough to be mistaken for it."

"It is excellent," observed Lady Ossulton. "You must give me the receipt for making it; for, as I am to become housekeeper, I beg or borrow whatever I can take hold of."

"And you really pretend you are going to become that homely character," said Mr. Damer, gravely.

"Yes, really, and without pretence, am I," returned the Countess, "going to settle down into that uninteresting, unsentimental sort of personage, whose chief merit will consist in being more economical than her neighbours."

"So, should we go to Northumberland," said he, "we shall not hear of the Countess of Ossulton patronizing this ball, canvassing for that member, attending these races, and expected at those assemblies."

"Oh! no, no!" said she, laughing; "but of the Countess of Ossulton, taught by experience

the little pleasure these things can afford, and preferring to them the dull routine of domestic life."

"Well, we shall see," said Mr. Damer, and he laughed.

"Well! we shall see," said the Countess, and she laughed also: "but I think you will yet own that it was not in a spirit of romance I made this declaration; and that while many speak from their imagination, Lady Ossulton ever spoke from her heart."

A murmur from the Earl, of its being time to go, soon obliged the Countess to take leave; and she did so with a regret that seemed portentous of her future fate. "Farewell, Caroline! I hope once more to see you! Farewell, Charles, we shall never meet again!" were her last and melancholy words; over which Mr. and Mrs. Damer pondered for a while, but concluded by attributing them to the low spirits which a prospect of a long separation might occasion.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ You once made a promise, a long time ago,
’Twas made half in jest—but ’twas not taken so :—
You ’ll be call’d to fulfil it, and cannot evade,
But I think you ’ll regret that it ever was made.”

OMITTING the detail of two or three months in the history of Lord and Lady Glenallan, which time was passed in France, we shall introduce the Marchioness to our readers in the character of a mother; whose duties she was perhaps better calculated to fulfil than those of a wife, for her child could provoke none of the proud passions by which its father was rendered miserable, and the little Earl of Montalpine conciliated her affections by reflecting all that beauty for which she herself was so celebrated.

The place of its birth, which finally proved to be London, had been a matter of endless altercation between the Marquess and his wife. He was anxious that the infant, who might prove heir to all his honours, should be born amidst the scenery from which they were derived, and tried to reconcile Lady Glenallan to it, by assurances that the first medical advice in Scotland should remain at the Castle while she thought it necessary; that every article she desired should be procured her from London; that any friends, whose company she wished for, should be on a visit—even Lady Isabella Ireton he would not exclude—if it could induce her to make Glenallan the place of her confinement: but no! nothing would do, the Marchioness professed herself to detest the Castle, and to entertain a determined resolution of never visiting it again till every thing about it was remodelled, Lady Penelope banished, and herself in such health and spirits as would

enable her to enjoy the company with which she should fill the house. But the very idea of going now she declared was sufficient to kill her, to be laid up in one of those gloomy rooms, on one of those beds, whose hearselike hangings still haunted her imagination, hearing nothing without but the melancholy falling of cascades, and within but the horrible broad Scotch.—Oh ! she should not survive it a week : “ And what would it all be for ? ” her Ladyship petulantly demanded, on one of the numerous occasions on which the subject was under discussion, “ to gratify a foolish whim of yours, and please a parcel of people who don’t care a farthing for either of us, or whether our child was born in Glenallan or Greenland.”

“ You are mistaken, Georgiana,” said the Marquess, “ my knowledge of the Scotch, acquired by a long residence amongst them, ena-

bles me to assert that it would be a matter of pride and importance to them for our child to be born at Glenallan."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the Marchioness proudly, "my child will be independent of popularity!"

"Rather thank Heaven, Lady Glenallan," returned the Marquess, "when your child has acted in a manner to deserve it."

"All I know is," said the Marchioness, "that I shall not earn it instead by going to that melancholy nunnery of a place."

"I own," observed his Lordship, "the extreme aversion you now express to Glenallan surprises me; when you were there you seemed to enjoy yourself."

"I enjoy myself, indeed!" returned the Marchioness contemptuously, "there was great scope for it, truly! there was great enjoyment to be derived from walking and riding about till I was tired to death, not more from the ex-

ercise than from hearing you and Mr. Douglas descant on the beauties of the place! Enjoy myself, indeed!" she again repeated with a sneer.

"I only wish," said the Marquess, "that I had known your sentiments then—that you had condescended to be a little more candid—not to say a little less deceitful."

"Yes, and a fine deal of opprobrium I should have got myself by it. There 'd have been your formal sister up in arms, and everybody far and wide haranguing about my pride, discontent, &c. No, thank you, my Lord—I was rather more politic than that; and I determined—yes, I determined to disappoint all the surmises that I knew very well had been formed of me."

"I wish," said the Marquess, "you would always confine yourself to disappointing unfavourable surmises, and justifying the contrary."

“ I should have to make many converts , returned she ; and for a moment one of the heavenly smiles of Georgiana Granville played about the beautiful features of Lady Glenallan.

However, without troubling our readers with the discussions which preceded the event, it will be sufficient to say that Lady Glenallan gave birth to her first child in London, about the latter end of November ; and by the time she was recovered enough to see visitors, town became crowded to excess. Among the first of the former, were two more welcome than all the rest—Lord Arabin and Lady Isabella Ireton. The sight of the latter, however, and an intimation from the former that his stay in London would not exceed a few days, reminded the Marchioness of a promise, which though she had all the inclination, she was not quite certain whether she had the power to fulfil ; namely, one made to Lady Isabel of

having her to stop with her during the winter. The Marchioness knew so well the prejudices which her lord now entertained against both brother and sister, that no spirit less determined than her own, could even have extorted from him a permission for their visiting: how to introduce, or rather how to carry, her intention of the latter's becoming an inmate of their house, she was somewhat at a loss. But the fertile imagination of woman soon suggested an expedient, which she thought would be effectual; and she determined to make Lord Glenallan's consent to the visit of her friend, the terms alone on which she would spend the ensuing summer at their castle in Scotland.

This settled, her Ladyship now only sought an interview with the Marquess, intending to communicate to him her resolution, and chance favoured her designs; for, disappointed of the party who were to have accompanied them, they went and returned one night *tête-a-tête* to

and from the Opera. Going, Lady Glenallan did not conceive the happy period for bringing forward the subject, the Marquess being a little annoyed by the recent impertinence of a servant; but when returning, his temper was restored to its usual placidity, and she began:—

“Did you observe Lord Arabin and his sister in the house to-night?”

“Yes,” returned the Marquess; “they were near us.”

“Dear! I wish I had seen them. I wonder his Lordship had not come up to speak me,” said Lady Glenallan. “I hope, however, that you took some notice of them; for really if they had insulted us, instead of showing us every attention when we were at their house, we could not have treated them with more indifference than we have done, since their coming to town.”

The Marquess was silent; and his lady commenced again.

“Really the world would be justified in supposing that the Earl of Arabin had taken some improper liberties with your wife, by the extraordinary manner in which you have cut his acquaintance, after your generally known intimacy before our marriage.”

“I shouldn’t wish that to be supposed either,” said his Lordship.

“Then depend upon it, it will,” returned Lady Glenallan; “and I assure you it is a most unpleasant stigma both on his character and mine.”

“His, from what I have lately learnt,” observed the Marquess, “does not require any additional stigma. It is already sufficiently disgraced by notorious profligacy.”

“What Lord Arabin’s private character may be, can be a matter of no moment to me,” returned her Ladyship; “I only wish my own not to be implicated in any way, which, let me tell you, if you persist in your present line of conduct towards the Earl, it certainly will be.”

“What would you have me do?” inquired his Lordship, whose weakness she had wrought upon.

“Why?” said the Marchioness, “I would have you ask Lord Arabin and his sister, immediately to dine with us ; account, if you can find any way, for your previous inattention, and insist on Lady Isabel’s passing her time with me. “Indeed,” added her Ladyship, with affected carelessness, and apparently sudden thought, “it must appear most ridiculous my having asked her as I did, when at Arabin Castle, to spend this winter with me, and making no repetition of the request now.”

“You asked her !” repeated Lord Glenallan in amazement—“you asked her to spend the winter with you !”

“Yes,” said the Marchioness, with perfect *sang froid*, “but I almost doubt whether I shall be able to prevail on her to come, she is now so attached to the country and seclusion.”

“There’s no fear,” returned his Lordship indignantly, “but she’ll come if she can, but great fear, Georgiana, that I shall not allow it; and really I am surprized when you are aware that I am acquainted with the sentiments she entertains for me, and of the manner in which she has spoken of me, that you have so little delicacy as to propose her residing in a house of which I am the master.”

“It would be surprizing,” observed Lady Glenallan coldly, “if I were not also the mistress, but while I am, I shall ask whom I please; and I assure you,” she continued raising her voice to a sharper key, “it is much more surprizing that I have patience to hear you talk so, to hear you revert, for the hundredth time, to that letter, which I am sure I wish to goodness had never been written.”

“I wish it also,” said the Marquess, endeavouring by the calmness of his manner to restrain the violence of hers, “and then I should

have known nothing of Lady Isabella Ireton that would have excluded her being a guest at my house, but as it is—”

“ Make no rash declarations, my Lord,” interrupted her Ladyship, “ for know what will be the consequence ! say but that Lady Isabel Ireton shall not go to your house, and I declare, that to Glenallan Castle at least I will never go, and that that infant whom I am now suckling, at your request, shall be consigned to the bosom of the first stranger who will give it nourishment.”

“ What !” said the Marquess, “ would you make your innocent boy suffer ? Do you prefer the company of Lady Isabel Ireton to the life of your child ?”

“ That does not follow,” returned Lady Glenallan, as they stopped at their own house, “ but what I have told you shall follow your refusal of my request ; so you know what you have to expect ;” and without waiting for an answer, her Ladyship got out of the carriage.

CHAPTER XV.

“ See, while I write my words are wet with tears ;
The less my sense, the more my love appears !
Sure, ’twas not much to bid one kind adieu ;
At least to feign was never hard to you.”

POPE.

A SHORT time before leaving the country, which the Mandevilles generally did immediately after Christmas, Agnes wrote the following letter to Catharine Morton :—

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

What am I to think of De Meurville ? I have, after a long interval, received another of these cold, extraordinary letters, so unlike any of those he addressed to me during the first few months of our separation ; so unlike what I, who, whether I scolded him for his silence, or im-

plored him to explain its cause, never resorted to any thing but the language of love, had a right to expect. With a caution which till latterly he never used, he does not now even write my name at full length, but after the A puts a dash, as if he feared that I should one day produce his letters in evidence against him; or as if, had I any such intention, I had not by me, kinder, dearer, more convicting ones! Oh, Catharine, had you seen him, who can now write to me thus coldly—when last we were together—whenever we were together—with what fondness he would hang about me, with what inestimable love he would plead for my smiles, had they been withdrawn from him—with what gentleness he would listen to remonstrances or advice from my lips, that he would not have borne from others. Had you even read his first letters to me, in which, though he tells me, and truly, that he says nothing which he would not venture to do were he by my side, you would

own friendship a chimera, if his for me were false,—feeling but a name, if De Meurville had none ! And yet this is he who now writes to me as he would to a casual acquaintance—tells me of the news of the day, and expresses common-place anxiety about my health, though he makes no inquiries after that of my family, or indeed any allusions to them in any way ; and in answer to my prayers and intreaties to learn in what manner I had lost his affections, or whether he had withdrawn them to her, who had certainly a better right to their possession, he makes no answer, but that he never possessed that ardency of disposition which would alone enable him to meet my expectations, or adequately return the regard with which I honour him. Then with what I should call cruelty in any one else, but must still by a gentler name in him, he starts doubts of the compatibility of our tempers—confesses his own to be often violent, always reserved, and sus-

pects mine—amiable, of course, he thinks it necessary to insert, as it is, to possess too much warmth to harmonize with his. On this I shall make no comment, but that he once thought very differently both of his temper and mine. Of fortune he next speaks, and in the most unaccountable manner, and for the first time, regrets that he has not more to offer me than he shall whenever we are married. Knows, whatever my romantic generosity may lead me to say, that possessing so large a one myself, I have a right to expect a similar one in the man whom I make my choice; and crowns all, by adjuring me not to let remembrance of him, or of any thing that may have passed between us, prevent my acceptance of an offer which may promise greater happiness. That, to those brought up as I had been, indulging the expectations I had a right to entertain—rank and honours superior to his could not but be looked for, and could not, whatever those

infatuated by love—which he was not, nor from the nature of his disposition ever could be—might pretend, but be necessary. Oh, Catharine ! this is he

“ Who so often smiling told me,
Wealth and power were trifling things,
While love smiling to behold me
Mock'd cold Time's destructive wings.”

But why does he talk of my expectations of rank and fortune being justified by my possessing and imparting them ; for is not this what he says, or means, when he knows that of the latter in marrying him I should have none to offer ; and that to the former his claims are greater than my own. Altogether, this letter, like all his latter ones, is a complete enigma ; and what he means by it, I know not : I only know that he is breaking my heart ; though I have so scrupulously avoided every thing likely to wound his, and even now, unkind as he is, I will not reproach him—I will implore him but to be candid with me ; and if he has transferred his

affections to the happy woman to whom he is betrothed, I will congratulate him on it, and witness with satisfaction what I cannot partake. But if he be otherwise,—if that heart, like a seducing ignis fatuus, is but leading some other astray, then De Meurville—

“ Fly me far as pole from pole,
Rise Alps between us, and whole oceans roll ;
Oh, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.”

I was interrupted in the part of my letter, where I left off at the entrance of Colonel Blomberg, who, as I believe I told you before, persecuted me with his company, and whose freedom of manner is most displeasing to me.

“ In tears, Miss Mandeville ?” he said, as I approached to meet him.

“ They are,” I replied, attempting to smile, “ become very frequent guests ; I feel so much the loss of my sister—of my sisters, indeed ; but Madelin’s absence has been more recent than that of Charlotte.”

“Don’t tell me,” said he, with a meaning, and, in my opinion, impertinent smile, “that the loss of a sister whom you are only deprived of by an excellent marriage, could have the effect of chasing the roses from these beautiful cheeks, of drenching these starry eyes in tears !”

“Perhaps, Colonel Blomberg,” said I, “you know better than I do myself the cause of my grief.”

“I know it better,” returned he, “than you would persuade yourself I do ; and it is the absence of one, dearer than the dearest sister which you mourn !”

Confounded by his words, I did not immediately reply, and was prevented when going to do so, by his inquiring, “If I had heard from the Count de Meurville lately ?”

Like a guilty thing, I started at the name ; and with embarrassment and hesitation began “I—I heard from him,” and then correcting

myself, my brother, I mean, heard from him."

"And he is quite well, I hope," interrupted the Colonel.

"Yes—or rather no," unintelligibly answered I; "he tells us that his health is very indifferent."

With unpleasant scrutiny my companion fixed his eyes for a moment on my face and then starting up, exclaimed, "Happy! happy De Meurville!" If worlds had depended on it, I could not at the immediate moment have inquired the cause of his happiness; but determining to redeem myself from the suspicions which my manner must have created, and favoured by Colonel Blomberg's standing with his back to me at a window, asked whether he envied the Count de Meurville for being deprived of that greatest blessing—health."

"I envy him, Miss Mandeville," returned he,

“ for possessing that blessing which would render immaterial the loss of every other.”

With apparent indifference, but dreading his answer, I demanded, “ What that precious possession was ?”

“ Your heart,” was the reply.

And I thought I should have sunk to the ground, but it was no moment for betraying all I felt, and sustained by my indignation, I said, “ Colonel Blomberg, you surprize and offend me by such an assertion ; one which you have no authority or foundation for making.”

“ Excuse me,” said he, “ the eyes of a lover discern what might have escaped those of an indifferent observer. They discovered the cause, of what my heart had long felt the result. I found myself rejected without the assignment of any reason ; I heard of others being so too. I saw you beautiful ! attractive ! but apparently preserved by the possession or

influence of something superior from being misled by flattery, or deluded by love ! I looked around for this magical but never-failing power, and then I also saw—the Count de Meurville ! young, fascinating, accomplished ; your general attendant in public, your constant companion in private ; and my suspicions were roused, but they were not confirmed till I watched closely his conduct, and yours ; and then, when I saw him animated in your presence, unhappy, or at least thoughtful, in your absence ; interested, though it was guardedly manifested, in all you did and said, and indulging, though cautiously, in the stolen looks of love ; when I witnessed all this in De Meurville, and in you, numberless, though feminine instances of anxiety about him ; constant deference to his opinion, and delight in his applause ! Then, then, Miss Mandeville, I understood what had rendered you each so indif-

ferent to the admiration of the world;—you were the world to each other.”

My silence during this long speech must lead you to think I had fallen into a fit; but dissolved in tears, half angry, half humbled, though more wretched than either, I listened, with my face averted, to what he was saying: all my ideas were in confusion, Colonel Blomberg was talking of what De Meurville and I had once been to each other; I only recollected what we were now, and sad conviction of the contrast gave me neither spirit to refute or to defend, no, not even power to withdraw from the presence of him who was harrowing up all my feelings; like one under the influence of some magical charm, I remained silent, motionless, and he continued.

“The discovery of your mutual attachment did not surprise me; you possess every attraction calculated to ensnare the heart of man;

De Meurville every fascination likely to entwine round that of woman: but I own it did—it does surprize me, that you allow others to be ignorant of it, thus exciting affections which you cannot return, justifying hopes which you never can realize! Would it not have been more candid, more kind, when, infatuated by your loveliness, I threw myself and all I possessed at your feet, deeming every good unimportant, unless through them I could enjoy

‘That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee,’

to have said my affections are placed irrevocably upon another?”

“Oh, Sir!” interrupted I, thinking it time to rouse myself, when I was suspected of being a heartless coquette, “could you expect me to own this to you, when I scarce venture to do it to my own heart—when I never did it to De Meurville—when I dare not to my parents?”

“Dare not!” interrupted he in evident sur-

prize, and somewhat softened accents ; “ is it so ? ”

“ It is,” said I, humbled by the confession ; “ for now it is useless to conceal it, but I would adjure you——”

“ Fear not, Miss Mandeville,” interrupted he, “ I shall not divulge it. Whatever circumstances at present intervene between your and De Meurville’s happiness, I hope, I sincerely hope, they will be removed. But tell me—tell me,” added he, as I was rising to leave the room, “ if fate so ordain it that you can never, never be the wife of De Meurville, will you—can you——”

“ I shall never be the wife of another,” anticipated I ; “ and now, now Colonel Blomberg, you must spare me any farther communication—I am unequal to it—but I rely on your honour.”

“ It will not disappoint you,” said he, in violent agitation ; and snatching up his hat, he,

apparently afraid to trust his voice to say another word, left the room, while I, overcome by a thousand contending emotions, left it immediately after for my own. Love for De Meurville still predominates over every other sentiment ; he must, I think, be deceived in some way respecting me, or he could never write to me so seldom and so coldly, or he cannot have received my letters, yet he makes no allusion to not having done so. But, in short, I am determined to believe him every thing but ungrateful, and so I will tell him ; and if he suspect any rival, let him banish his suspicions, for their indulgence will, I foretel from the nature of my own feelings, create one too formidable for either he or me to overcome—one, to whose icy arms I shall be consigned, when the repentant ones of De Meurville would seek to receive me in vain.

I am, my dearest Catharine, &c.

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ What a motley generation,
Sprung from fancy’s teeming brain ;
Shifting age and sex and station,
Swarm within this magic plain !”

POSSESSING a weakness of character, which for ever warred against the dignity man ought to sustain, Lord Glenallan, notwithstanding the indignation and surprise he had expressed when the Marchioness announced having asked Lady Isabel Ireton on a visit to her, was yet induced to give his consent to it ; and the latter had not been more than a few days an inmate of his house, during which she certainly exerted all her capabilities of pleasing, when the Marquess, forgetful of the injuries she had done him, or per-

haps no longer considering them so great, from loving Lady Glenallan less, began to prefer her company as much as he had once disliked it : she flattered his vanity so artfully as to lead him to believe she liked himself ; she fondled his child so incessantly as to convince that she idolized Montalpine ; and more than all, she broke unpleasant *tête-à-têtes* between him and the Marchioness, which heretofore had been of frequent occurrence.

To her Ladyship she was acceptable on different grounds, as the sister of Lord Arabin, as one with whom she could unrestrainedly abuse her husband, and as one who could assist her in spending his fortune ; for Lady Isabel, parsimonious to meanness in the disposal of her own income, could advise, most liberally, the laying out of another's, and profit unsparingly by any *carte-blanche* which should be given for appropriation to herself.

But an event was now discussing for execution

between her Ladyship and the Marchioness, which, if it were to succeed to the expectations of both, would unite all that was new to all that was elegant, all that was beautiful to all that was grand. Nothing less than a fancy-ball, which Lady Glenallan determined on giving in celebration of the birth of her son, and which, as commemorating so important an event, she was of course anxious should eclipse every thing of the kind given before. The happy disposition and size of her rooms favoured any designs her Ladyship might choose to put in practice, and money of course could command every requisite for their execution. Consultations were held with the first people in the line of arranging such things; and it was finally settled that the suite of apartments, in which at present Turkey carpets, Grecian couches, splendid lustres, &c. reigned unmolested, should be transformed into a snowy world; where icicles and stars, and glassy lakes and streaming lights, representing

the aurora borealis, should glitter in bright contrast to snowy mountains, sombre firs, and scarlet-berried shrubs.

In short, it was to be a Siberian scene ; and to complete the resemblance, here and there a hut, such as the exiled Elizabeth might have lived in when she first learned the filial love that led to the emancipation of her father ; and sparry caves, which might be the rendezvous of robbers or wild beasts, were to be romantically disposed ; while, through the savage scene, music wild and sweet was yet to wander. Nothing appropriate was to be omitted ; and when the night arrived for which all this was created, when, glittering with light which had the appearance, thought not the reality, of proceeding from the thousand stars which studded the azure ceiling, heaven itself seemed to have lent splendour to a scene already emblazoned with all the magnificence of earth. Nothing

could be more gorgeous than the effect, and even the Marchioness owned it beautiful.

“ If all this is beautiful,” said Lord Arabin, as she and he were strolling through the rooms previous to the arrival of the company, “ what is Lady Glenallan?”

“ Oh ! only a foil to it, to be sure, my Lord,” returned she, “ though I am personifying its Empress ”

“ Oh, no !” exclaimed the Earl ; “ but so incomparably lovely as to appear the inmate of a brighter, better world than this.”

“ That compliment,” said her Ladyship, “ would have been more *apropos*, if ever it could be *apropos* to me, this time last year.”

“ Why?” inquired Lord Arabin ; “ you could not have been lovelier then than now.”

“ I was an angel then,” said Lady Glenallan, laughing, and glancing at the Marquess, who, with another gentleman, and Lady Isa-

bel Ireton, was at the other end of the room.

“So you are now!” returned the Earl, contriving to engage her hand as he spoke.

“I did not make my remark to elicit yours,” observed the Marchioness, “but in allusion to an old story,—I dare say you’ve heard it—my going to a fancy ball in the character of an Angel.”

“Never,” said Lord Arabin, “I’ve been out of the way of hearing every thing.”

“What! never heard,” cried the Marchioness, “that it was in that character I first captivated Lord Glenallan’s heart?”

“In what other could you,” said the Earl, “when it is the only one you possess?”

The Marchioness was about to reply, but thundering knocks at the door announced the arrival of company; and promising to tell his Lordship all about it some other time, she prepared to meet her guests.

“Should this silver veil be up or down?” inquired Lady Isabel, who personified a Spanish Girl.

“Oh up, by all manner of means!” said the Marchioness, “as you have no Duenna near.”

And now a large party entered, some in, others out of character, which was almost immediately followed by another. Among the fantastic groups that presently filled the room, the Mandevilles appeared conspicuous; Lady Mandeville splendidly dressed, but out of character: her two daughters, Arabella and Agnes, as Flower-girls; their brothers as Scotch Highlanders; Mrs. Balfour as a Starry Night. Her Ladyship listened and answered with delight to the numerous inquiries which were made after the Countess of Ossulton, and announced that Mr. and Mrs. Russel, with Mr. and Mrs. Damer, would arrive directly, which they did: the two ladies attired as Diana and Hebe; the gentlemen out of character. Mr. Russel indeed

must have metamorphosed if he could appear anything but an ill-looking ruffian. Later than the rest, for they rather came under the denomination of fine people, Lord and Lady Clavers mingled among the grotesque group: she glittering with spangles, in character of a Circassian Princess, hung on the arm of her elegant husband, who was in a Turkish costume.

The sight of the latter, once the intimate friend, was not necessary to remind Agnes of De Meurville. In the midst of the gay scene which surrounded her,—where royalty moved distinguished,—where beauty shone triumphant,—where heroes blazed with orders, all her thoughts were fixed on him who was now perhaps bestowing on another that love and attention he had once delighted to dedicate to her, and which, wherever it was paid, she knew from experience would be too fascinating not to inspire a return. Thoughts such as these were ill calculated to communicate any thing

but sadness to her countenance ; and so inappropriate did its languid, thoughtful expression appear to the light, common-place character she was personifying, that more than one remarked she would better have played the part of a Nun.

“ A Nun of the Order of Despair,” observed a gentleman, in reply to another who had made the preceding observation.

“ Yes,” returned his friend ; “ but is it possible,” he continued, “ that this can be that beautiful girl who came out last winter, and to whom I nearly lost my heart ? ”

“ The very same, depend upon it,” said Mr. Dynevor, for that was the name of the gentleman.

“ Why, if she had been married since,” rejoined his friend, “ it could scarcely have created such a change.”

“ For the worse, does your Lordship mean ? ” said Mr. Dynevor.

“ Oh, for the worse, to be sure ; what woman was ever improved in her looks by marriage, or rather did not lose in them ?”

“ I don’t know that altogether, my Lord,” returned his companion, “ look at Lady Glenallan, look at Lady Clavers,—look at the Duchess of Tremfoyle—all these brides of the other day : have they lost any thing of beauty ?”

“ Two of those you have named had nothing to lose,” returned his Lordship, “ and Lady Glenallan, you know,” he continued, looking at the Marchioness, who was hanging on the arm of the Prince of C—b—g, “ is a phoenix, to whom general rules cannot extend.”

“ She is generally reckoned so, I know,” replied his friend.

“ And not by you ?” inquired his Lordship.

“ No ; I cannot say I never saw the woman who would bear comparison with Lady Glenallan.”

“ Then you cannot say as much as I can,”

observed his Lordship; "but, perhaps you allude to the Venus de Medicis, and with that, if report speaks true, even a Glenallan could not stand the test."

"No, I confine myself to living prototypes," returned Mr. Dynevor; "and I have seen women more to my taste than the Marchioness:—I prefer blonde, to auburn beauties."

"Lady Glenallan," said his Lordship, "unites the perfections of both; for while her eyes and hair are to a certain degree dark, her complexion is delicate as milk and roses."

"They certainly are—it certainly is," returned Mr. Dynevor; "but," and he hesitated; "I believe it is the expression," he presently continued, "I cannot separate from the beauty; and I own there is in Lady Glenallan's, a heartlessness and pride, to me the most revolting. She seems to wonder at your presuming to live in the same world with her."

"Well, I have not patience," said his Lord-

ship, “to hear you thus decry the loveliest work in the creation; and I cannot wish you worse than that you may never have a wife resembling her.”

“Lord Glenallan would be the best judge of the malevolence of that wish,” returned his friend; “and if I do not very much mistake, he would not consider it the worst that could be denounced.”

“But who is that Diana that passed us just now?” interrupted his companion; “she with the black eyes, I mean?”

“Oh, that? Mrs. — I forget—a Mandeville that was.”

“Ossulton?” said his Lordship.

“Oh, no!” not Lady Ossulton, but—Russell——Russell—ah, that’s the name I mean. She who married her husband when he was drunk.”

“Horrible! shocking!” said his Lordship.

“Can she,” he added, as they passed Agnes, “be the sister of my pensive Flora?”

“Of your pensive Flora, my Lord,” returned his companion, “and of that lady in the blue petticoat covered with stars; and of that ordinary Flower girl,”—looking at Arabella.

“Make her out sister to every one in the room, for what I care,” said his Lordship, “but not,” he added, as under the pretext of buying flowers they approached Agnes, “to my lovely Flora.”

“How do you sell your flowers, my pretty girl,” asked Mr. Dynevor.

“Cheap, very cheap, Sir,” replied she, putting her taper fingers into the basket, as if to select some for his purchase.

“Customers like to choose for themselves,” said he.

“Not, I think,” observed his Lordship, “when they have such hands to choose for them! I, at least, should rather be chosen for.”

“Are you not afraid of being cheated?” asked his companion, who personified a miser.

“In dealings with so fair a seller, there is probability of my losing something more important than money,” observed his Lordship.

“What can be more important?” said his friend.

“What can never be recovered,” returned his Lordship; “money may.”

“You are mistaken,” observed the Miser, “I never knew an instance of it yet, except once, indeed, in my own case, when, having been unhappy enough to drop a penny in the street—which improvidently, and contrary to my usual custom, I had put into my pocket in the morning—I after a day’s searching, found it at last, dirty and disfigured indeed, but still a penny.”

“What’s this talk about a penny?” asked a snowy-bearded Jew; “I discourse of nothing but gold.”

“ Were I rich as thee, Solomon, I would not either,” said the Miser.

“ What avails lucre ?” asked a placid Quaker.

“ So much,” said a shrivelled Gipsev, shaking her head, “ that without it I could not tell thee thy fate ; but let but a silver piece cross my hand, and I will tell all that may happen to thee.”

“ I want not to know,” said the Quaker, and moved on.

“ Past one o'clock, and a fine frosty morning !” cried a stout watchman, as he passed.

“ London Evening Star ! London Evening Post !” cried two voices in quick opposition to one another, about the room.

“ Hope I don't intrude ! Hope I don't intrude ! Just dropped in. Who's this ? What's that ? Where are you going ? What are you doing ?” chattered Paul Pry, thrusting his umbrella into every one's face.

“Cherry ripe, cherry ripe!” warbled a couple of voices, angelic voices!

“Fine fresh eggs! fine ripe oranges! nice neat baskets!” resounded from less harmonious ones.

“Who are those Swiss Shepherdesses?” whispered Agnes to Mr. Damer, with whom she was.

“The Misses Torrens, I think. Will you speak?”

She did, and they were polite and formal as usual. While conversing, a Lochinvar, in the person of Mr. Douglas, came up.

“Well, Miss Mandeville,” said he, shaking hands with Agnes, for they had become intimate during the course of two or three visits to Surrey, made since the time he had first gone there, “I have lost a bet by this being you, for I swore it was not, and even now I am doubtful.”

“You may yet gain it,” said she, “if doing so depends on my not being Miss Mandeville.”

“Am I to infer,” asked he, “that this lady by your side has that precedence?”

Agnes smiled,—“Arabella has been promoted since you last saw us,” she said.

“In more ways than one,” thought Mr. Douglas; “but,” he inquired, turning again to Agnes, “what have you been doing with yourself since I saw you? have you been dancing, or walking, or singing yourself to death?”

“Or,” interrupted Agnes, “by what effectual means have I metamorphosed myself, you would ask?”

“Faith! I should,” said he; “you are grown so thin, so pale, and I almost fancy so sad. What can it be? Has Corydon proved unkind?”

Agnes smiled, and was glad to be spared answering, by the coming up of a Beggar-woman,

who pleaded most vociferously for herself and children.

“Go to the Monk yonder,” said Mr. Douglas.
“Ask what he can spare you out of the funds of his convent.”

“Go to the Devil,” cried he to whom the appeal was then made.

“You should have sent her to a Sister of the Order of Charity,” said Miss Torrens.

“Do you think she would have found more mercy from your sex than our’s?” asked Douglas.

“To be sure she would,” said the lady.
“But who is that beautiful Spanish girl? I have been longing to know all the evening,” added she, as hanging on the arm of Mr. Granville, Lady Isabella Ireton passed them.

“That,” returned Douglas, “is the sister of the Earl of Arabin, Lady Isabel Ireton; but you must not call her beautiful; for I assure you she has no pretensions to being so. Even Lady Glenallan, her best friend, does not consider

her so. She is interesting, elegant, fascinating—every thing else.”

“What is beauty,” asked Cecilia Torrens, “if it is not comprehended in that combination?”

“What is beauty!” repeated her sister. “Can you ask that when Lady Glenallan is near?”

“Or while she herself can show,” said Mr. Douglas, looking at Cecilia.

“What do you think of Lady Clavers?” enquired Agnes, addressing Mr. Douglas.

“Oh! she’s not long for this world, to judge from her appearance,” said he; “and all her beauty is melancholy. Eyes so bright, colour so beautiful, a form so gossamer, are but sad tokens of decline!—she is going to Italy immediately with her husband.”

“I fancy the dancing will soon be commencing,” said Arabella; “as the music, which had hitherto been confined to the warbling of flutes

and flageolets, now proceeded from a full band."

"We shall dance on snow," observed Agnes, looking at the whitened ground, which had all the appearance of it.

"Will you dance with me?" said Mr. Douglas; "will you play Ellen to my Lochinvar?"

"If you prefer no better representative," replied she.

"I could not have a better," said Douglas, and presently led her to a quadrille which was forming; and where the Arcadian Nymph, the British Tar, the Scotch Peasant, the Spanish Don, the Crier of Eggs, and Spouter of Plays, &c. &c., were promiscuously paired together.

Another, and another quadrille were soon made up, which, with the occasional interlude of waltzes and Spanish dances, continued till supper. After the latter, Lady Isabel Ireton, to the admiration of some, envy of others, and

slight surprise of all, performed by herself a beautiful figure dance, in which the splendid silver veil that hung about her was brought into frequent and graceful requisition; now half-shading her face, as if in coy concealment of its charms, now thrown back, as in proud security of conquest, and now folded over her bosom, as, like a penitent Magdalen, she sank in graceful reverences to the ground; but, finally, trembling, falling, and leaving displayed a figure whose happy proportions, whose graceful symmetry, a dress of white lace adorned, and pearls appropriately placed defined;—a figure so lovely as to draw on Lord Arabin many an envying eye, when, at the conclusion of the dance, he threw his arm around it, and, amidst loud manifestations of applause, conducted his sister to a seat.

Encouraged by the example of Lady Isabel, several young ladies, in duos and trios, performed figure dances; and it was not till the morning

sun announced the return of day, that any of the party thought of retiring, which they then did, with a universal sentiment of satisfaction towards their noble entertainer ; who, remembering that it was the birth of her child she was celebrating, that Royalty presided, and that a splendid account of the whole would appear in the Morning Post, had throughout the evening paid such impartial attentions to her guests, and indulged in manners so flattering and amiable, as to win many a heart she had previously alienated.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ When sinks the blaze of fancied worth,
Whose lustre fed the fire of love;
The fall for ever darkens earth,
And dims the hope which rests above.”

BEFORE leaving the country, Agnes, whom the bare possibility of losing a letter from De Meurville would have rendered miserable, thought it necessary to take some precaution against such an event, though rather at a loss by what means to do it; for the servant who had hitherto enquired after the arrival of any letter at the post office, would accompany them to town, and making another confidant was, to say nothing of the additional humiliation, a dangerous step. However, something like an inter-

mediate measure presented itself, and promised to clear her of Scylla without wrecking her on Charybdis. This was suggested by her maid, who stated nothing to be easier than engaging an acquaintance of her own, in the neighbouring village, to receive and forward to her any letter that might come.

“And what will she think, Miss,” said the former, laughing; “but that it’s from a sweetheart of my own, and that I prefer him directing to me by a different name?”

Oh! there are moments, and such did the good-natured, well-meant speech of her domestic render the present to Agnes, in which we think the acquisition of the world could not atone to us, for the mortification we feel in being put, by a condescension to artifice, on a level with our inferiors! Her blood rushed to her face and neck; and that she and Alice—that the beloved, or once beloved of De Meurville, and a low-bred attendant, should entertain any sen-

timent, or resort to any expedient, in common, was unutterably humiliating.

But it was not for Agnes now to display dignity which she had induced another to forget, therefore, saying quickly, "Well, Alice, take an opportunity soon of seeing your friend, for we shall be leaving the country, you know, in a few days, and I'll reward you both if you act discreetly;" she left the room.

Though in expecting a letter from De Meurville, and expecting, as Agnes did, that that letter, elucidating all preceding ones, would regain him the place in her esteem which he could never lose in her heart, Miss Mandeville acted like her sex—who anticipate what they wish—who rely on what they love—who hope on the confines of despair! she yet indulged expectations, of which there was little promise of fulfilment; for a long time had elapsed since hearing from De Meurville, and when she did, his letters had been written in a strain so cold,

as to cut her to the heart—so cold, as to induce her to adopt a similar style in reply, and propose that it should end their correspondence ; thinking the latter would induce from him a confession of uneasiness with regard to her conduct, and entreaties to explain it, or of a revolution in his own heart—and to forgive it.

The latter, indeed, was a melancholy prospect ; but to the former she clung, and with all the security of innocence, desired only an opportunity of clearing herself from suspicions, which she could not but believe must have been infused into her lover's mind.

In short, Agnes, unsophisticated in the midst of corruption ; gentle, though witnessing in her mother and formerly in her eldest sisters the vilest passions ; and fond and confiding, though perpetually hearing love and confidence laughed at as absurd ; was willing to suppose her De Meurville every thing but false to her, or at least capable of being so, without one parting

word, one fond adieu to all their past affection ; one contrite confession of his unworthiness ever to have enjoyed it ; and looked forward to hearing from him, as to the arrival of some blessed goal which would terminate all her anxieties.

Seldom a week passed during the residence of the Mandevilles in London, in which one or more messengers did not go down to the country ; for, from Hermitage, they procured their fruit, vegetables, &c., and the impatience with which Agness would expect their return—the ecstasy of hope in which she would fly to Alice, and demand, “ Is there a letter ? ” would have caused her lover, could he have beheld it, bitter tears at the idea of ever having disappointed. But that it had been too often for even her sanguine heart any longer to be buoyed up with hope, the slackened pace, the woe-begone looks, the scarcely audible inquiry, which at the end of three months after writing to De Meurville, succeeded to the eager step, the impatient

glance, the agitated inquiry, bore ample testimony; and if once the question was put in doubt, it was now demanded in despair. But it was not always destined to be answered in the negative, for one evening, when all the family, except herself, were absent, and she, rather from custom than otherwise, went to look for Alice, knowing a messenger had just arrived from the country; she saw the latter with something, which at nearer view proved to be a letter.

Like a frantic creature, Agnes seized it, and with trembling hands examined alternately the direction and the seal. The former addressed to the usual name, was written by him without a doubt; the latter was his impression, at a glance, and she kissed both. But the letter had been too long deferred, and Agnes had suffered too much from anxiety for its arrival to create those unmingled sentiments of joy it might once have done. On the contrary,

she burst into tears, and when returned to the drawing-room, held it without attempting to open it, in a sort of convulsive clasp.

“ If it should prove unkind,” thought she, and the idea almost suffocated her ; trembling she stood, her heart beating, her colour dying, and crimsoning on her cheeks alternately, her eyes and soon the letter drenched in tears. She sat down for a moment, and then impatient rose, advanced towards the window and looked out ; but the noises of the streets, the rumbling of carriages were uncongenial sounds ; and a wild foreign air that was playing near the house, had in it, to her, something melancholy—she rushed into an inner room, there, by a single light, which she had brought in and placed on the table, did Agnes kneel down ; not, indeed, to address her heavenly Father, for she thought it would be impious to call on him to calm feelings which, though he has given man power to excite, he has given

woman reason to restrain ; but to contemplate the picture of De Meurville, which she took from her bosom, which she placed before her, which, as if the lifeless thing could hear her prayers, could behold her anguish, she implored not to disappoint all her hopes, which, crying, she fixed her eyes upon, as with a sort of desperate resolution she tore open the letter ; it was short, very short. She glanced first at the end to be certain it was from De Meurville, then at the beginning, which commenced, death-blow to the wretched girl to whom it was addressed—"Madam,"—Agnes read no further, but fell to the ground. It thus proceeded : " I am weary of your letters, alternately filled with your reproaches and your affection ; what I have done to deserve the former, I know not ; whatever to have excited the latter, I know still less ; you accuse me of having some other engagement, as if I had ever attempted to conceal it ; as if, on the contrary, I had not often urged it in proof

of the impossibility of our ever being happy together. You adjure me, by my honour, to remember the sacred vows that have passed between us, and you may rest assured I do ; but equally may you, that whether I am the husband of another or not, I never, never, will be yours ; and that common-place attentions should ever have deluded you into the idea I loved you, I deeply regret ; but this letter, if none of my preceding ones have succeeded in doing so, will, I think, end the delusion ; and now A——, if you would be wise, you would make happy some man, possessing advantages in every respect greater than mine, and enjoying health, spirits, and peace of mind, which your wretched De Meurville has lost for ever ! though you are not, as you express a fear, the cause of it : let, as you desire, our correspondence cease ; it can no longer answer any purpose on either side.

“ And believe me to be, &c., &c.,

“ C. DE MEURVILLE.”

This letter, carelessly written and interspersed with many erasures, was lying open by the side of Agnes, who was extended on the ground, when one of the folding-doors, which divided the drawing-room opened, and Alice entered. But had her parents, had De Meurville himself entered, it would not have disturbed the trance in which, white as statuary marble, Agnes lay. Alarmed at the sight of her young mistress, to whom she had come with the hopes of being able to congratulate her on the contents which so wished-for a letter she thought must contain, Alice screamed, and rang violently for help; taking, however, in her fright the prudent precaution of thrusting the letter into her pocket, before she raised the inanimate Agnes.

“ Alas ! Alas ! ” cried she, when the servants began to enter ; “ what can have happened to my poor young lady ? Here I came up, thinking she must be lonely by herself ; and

what did I find but the dear lovely creature lying like one dead !”

“ Oh, mercy ! mercy !” with every other ejaculation, exclaimed all the servants as they crowded round the sofa on which Agnes was now laid ; “ what can have happened to her ?”

“ She must have seen a ghost !” cried one.

“ What nonsense you are talking,” said another.

“ Run one of you,” said Alice, “ for the doctor, and if he’s not at home, do you, William, go for the apothecary, and say he must come instantly.”

Dispatches were sent in every direction, and drenches of vinegar and æther had a little revived Agnes before the arrival of the physician and apothecary, who came together. The former, after feeling her pulse, pronounced a sudden shock to have occasioned her fainting, and ordered instant bleeding to avert the fatal

effects which a sudden rush of the blood from the heart to the brain was likely to occasion. This operation completely roused her, and she turned her dewy dovelike eyes on those around her. But to the inquiries of the physician as to what had alarmed her, and brought on her illness, she seemed at first unwilling, or unable to reply ; but at length, bursting into tears, as if at the bare recollection, she said that something she had been reading frightened her.

Dr. Wilcourt, who was a friend as well as physician to the Mandeville family, and had long beheld the declining health of Agnes with a prophetic eye, now shook his head with the mournful expression of one whose fears some circumstance has confirmed, though not first created ; and telling her kindly not to think of it any more, and never again to read such things, he moved to a table to write a prescription. The housekeeper followed, and to her inquiring glance he returned a steady one,

which seemed to say, “your young lady is not long for this world.” Mrs. Terrance sighed audibly, and looked as if she could have sobbed; but the physician, with a reproving countenance, called her attention to his directions for bathing the feet, preparing something warm, &c. which he continued to give while writing the prescription.

Though not a moment had elapsed after the return of Agnes to her senses, before she had whispered to Alice an agitated inquiry after the fate of her letter, it was not till she was in bed, and Mrs. Terrance departed to mull some wine, that she had an opportunity of getting it again into her own possession. The sight of the letter, (or rather recollections it brought to the mind of the writer) reminded Agnes of the picture of De Meurville, which she had left on the drawing-room table, and almost with a scream she implored Alice to go for it.—“Oh, run!—fly,” she cried, “and let no one see it.”

Alice did run—did fly;—and then her mistress recollected, for the first time, that it would betray to the former a secret she had studiously preserved from her, namely, who this lover so prized, so faithless, so unfeeling, so beloved, was; and she felt tempted to follow her, and rescue De Meurville from the discovery; but the speedy return of Alice, who (relying on the reflection of the moon, which was shining in the back drawing-room) had gone without a light, and the haste with which she demanded, as she put the portrait into the hands of her mistress, “Is this it? for I hear Mrs. Terrance coming!” relieved Agnes from her fears; and while she was hesitating whether to have the picture locked up, or restored to the bosom on which in tears De Meurville had first placed it, and in agony implored its remaining, the housekeeper entered; and she had only time to put that and the letter under her pillow, with a determination to read the latter before morning.

The next morning, and many a morning, rose for Agnes, before she overcame the shock which a perusal of the Count de Meurville's letter gave her, containing at once sentiments [so unkind, assertions so unfounded, heartlessness so undisguised, that when the outward effect of it on her constitution was less apparent, the inward preying of it on her heart was more destructive. He had wounded every feeling, he had crushed every hope, he had repulsed every overture, and his gentle Agnes was dying by the hand which she had once looked forward to for ever uniting her own.

Lady Mandeville was the person most insensible to her daughter's declining health; and while strangers remarked it, acquaintances lamented it, domestics commiserated it, she asserted her not to look differently from what she had always done, and only requiring greater dissipation to restore her spirits. Acting on this idea, her Ladyship took her out every

night, totally regardless of cold, or of the cough which seemed ringing her knell; and kept her up waltzing, or singing, until day-break, laughing at the pity some ventured to express for the unfortunate victim, and unaware of the contempt and disgust all felt for so unfeeling a mother.

Agnes herself was a passive instrument, and while the cause of her ill-health was undiscerned, was indifferent to its continuance or amendment. Obligated to appear cheerful when her heart was breaking, and to assume interest when she felt none, she had acquired mechanical words and smiles, which to those who had not been previously acquainted with her, only gave the idea of her being extremely inanimate; but to those who had, of some mental malady having taken root, which no medicine could reach, and of which no heart but her own could tell the bitterness. The latter supposition was indeed most true: had there been any one who

could participate in what she felt, it would have been some alleviation to her sufferings; but as it was, she was thrown entirely upon herself, and weighed down by concealment of misery. In short, life at eighteen, became to Agnes Mandeville no longer desirable; and the world in which De Meurville lived, no world for her!

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ For me what new frowns of Misfortune remain,
For me now the longest, yet last in her train ;
Does the tempest still brood o’er my ill-fated head ;
While Hope, and her fanciful pleasures are fled ?
Shall I fly to the cell where Despair sits alone,
And mark with deep sorrow each mouldering stone ?
Or madly embrace what I cannot avoid,
And mock all the blessings I once had enjoyed ?”

DERMODY.

SUMMER had once more returned, and once more found the Mandevilles assembled at Hermitage, different in some respects from the family they had been when last there ; and in more, from what they had been when first introduced to our readers.

The marriage of Lady Ossulton had proved productive of none of those advantages her mother had fondly anticipated ; and that of Mrs. Russell had before the expiration of twelve

months been annulled, under circumstances of notoriety and infamy. Of the former they had seen nothing since her leaving them, and all her letters betrayed, though they did not confess, deep depression and disappointment. To the Earl she alluded but seldom ; to the anxious inquiries of her mother after her health, happiness, &c. she returned indirect replies ; and any arrangements of the latter for their meeting, or having some of her family with her, were evaded, or postponed to indefinite periods. In short, over the fate of the Countess hung an impenetrable, though visible, gloom ; and the total seclusion in which every account of her, reported her living, and the little consequence that her title had brought with it, either to herself or her connexions, while it mortified the latter, delighted many a heart which had bitterly envied her ever possessing it.

But if Lady Mandeville's vanity was wounded by the conduct of one child, would it not

seem natural that her heart should be much more by the guilt of another? and that if Lady Ossulton's not enjoying the celebrity, and mixing in the grandeur, which would have gratified her was annoying, Mrs. Russell, plunged by her mother's injudicious counsels into a wilderness of misery and guilt, was dreadful! But such was not the case with Lady Mandeville; and even the experience of the former being evidently rendered wretched by her ill-assorted marriage, and the latter, desperate to free herself from it, could not prevent her goading on another of her daughters to the same perdition, deluding her with the same hopes, anticipating for her the same pleasures, founding them on the same follies! In Agnes, indeed, she had not the efficient materials to work upon, which she had had in Madelina and Charlotte; and a ducal coronet, which would have turned the head of either of her sisters, might have solicited her acceptance for ever in

vain, had she not been actually maddened into a promise of receiving it by the cruelty of her mother ; who finding intreaties and tenderness unavailing, resorted to unkindness and punishments the most unjustifiable, such as it would have been thought the dying looks of Agnes would have prevented her enforcing ; but neither they, nor a consideration of the shattered, shrivelled being into whose arms she wished to throw her, had any effect in softening Lady Mandeville towards her daughter, until she gained her consent to a marriage with the Duke of Westennera ; and then, indeed, all her severity was exchanged for blandishments ; then all the wishes of the former, were but too limited to gratify her mother's desire of pleasing her. But then all compliance was vain, all kindness was lavished on a wretched, heart-broken creature, whom, after dragging to the brink of the grave, she vainly attempted to re-animate with hope and joy ; on a creature,

whom, to judge from her looks, hope could never exhilarate, and to whom joy could never more be known !

Inspiring, as she did in every beholder, impressions so melancholy, it may seem astonishing that any man but the one who had caused all her grief, however he might commiserate her, should desire to obtain her for a bride ; and even the Duke of Westennera, at the height of his infatuation, often wondered at it himself. But there was a something so angelically innocent, so celestially calm, in the person and mind of Agnes, as to deify her in his imagination, and make him look upon her as an angel, connected with whom he should learn to repent all his past profligacy, and abjure any future ; in comparison with whom, superior beauty, fortune, rank, became contemptible ; and to bestow honours and dignity in this world, on a creature whom, of all he had ever seen, he fancied most capable of leading him to eternal

bliss in the next, became the most ardent desire of the Duke of Westennera.

Little did Agnes imagine the task that was prepared for her ; or that she, herself on the brink of eternity, was expected to prepare a fellow-creature for it, and one for whom any sentiment she entertained, must be that of disgust ; the Duke having shown so little delicacy in his pursuit of a heart, which he evidently saw revolted from him, and of which, when he could not obtain the affections, he asked but the owner. How he ever came to have it in his power to demand either may seem extraordinary ; but it was occasioned by one of those unlooked-for accidents which sometimes occur. Travelling in the part of Surrey where Hermitage lay, his Grace had been attacked by a violent fit of the gout, which impeded his journey, and laid him up at a wretched inn in the neighbourhood. Hearing of his situation, the Mandevilles immediately contrived an easy me-

thod of his being brought up to their house, and from the time of his arrival to the present, which comprehended about a month, treated him with every hospitality. To that, and to the love he felt for Agnes, were they indebted for his prolonged stay, all symptoms of his gout having disappeared at the end of a fortnight; and now it seemed settled that he was but to leave them with Agnes as his wife:—with Agnes, who had neither strength left to oppose her fate, nor spirit to endure the altercation that resistance would produce, but who prepared to submit to it with the desperation of despair, wanting one completion alone to all her woes—that of hearing De Meurville was married; which intelligence accidentally came to her knowledge.

Walking one evening alone, at some distance from the house, and in a retired part of the grounds, she was surprized by meeting a young man of genteel appearance, who, at her ap-

proach, seemed slightly embarrassed, and who, when she, after returning his salutation, was about to move on, accosted her with an apology for being found intruding there, confessing that an irresistible desire of taking a sketch had led him.

“Apologies are unnecessary,” said the lady, faintly; and, without further remark, would have passed on, when the stranger, turning with her, again addressed her.

“I am a foreigner, Madam,” said he, “taking a pedestrian tour through England, and among the beautiful places it has been my lot to see, in travelling through that interesting country, I have beheld few equal in loveliness to this.”

Rather afraid of provoking rudeness by total inattention to her companion, whose familiarity yet displeased her, Agnes asked from what country he came.

“From Germany,” was the reply.

“From Germany!” repeated Agnes involuntarily; and a thousand recollections rushed to her heart at that moment.

Evidently perceiving the emotion he had created, the stranger inquired if she had any friends residing there, respecting whose welfare he might have the happiness of informing her.

“None, that it is probable you should know,” returned she, restored to her self-possession, and ashamed that he should have seen her for a moment deprived of it.

“And yet,” said he, “my acquaintance is extensive, especially about Court. Indeed, from some of the first noblemen at it, I have received letters of introduction to many families in England.”

A single inquiry was now only necessary to satisfy Agnes as to whether his acquaintance comprehended the Count de Meurville; but that she was unequal to making, and fortunately was saved the necessity, by the stranger

mentioning the name of the Count among that of others.

“The Count De Meurville,” said he, “is a particular friend of mine; and possibly you may have met with him, for he was travelling in this part of England lately, and stopping at Sir William Mandeville’s in this neighbourhood, to whom by-the-by, though he forgot to give me a letter, he desired me to make a thousand remembrances if I should meet with him, or any of his family.”

Agnes, agitated to the last degree, both at hearing thus suddenly of De Meurville, and at the free manner of the stranger in whose power she entirely was, could scarcely utter an intelligible reply; but fearing to make none, and wishing to make the shortest, murmured out that she knew him.

“A very gentlemanly man,” continued her companion. “Pity that he should have thrown himself away so early in life.”

“How?” before she was aware of it, Agnes had exclaimed.

“Why, by making a very inferior sort of marriage,” returned the other. “He was betrothed, as probably you might know, to a lady of great rank and fortune; but breaking his engagement with her, not quite justifiably though she is horribly ugly, is going to be married to a pretty girl without fortune.”

Time was when such a communication would perhaps have struck Agnes dead; but now she was too much inured to suffering, too much prepared to hear the worst of any event, to be totally overcome by it; and, unchecked by any emotion as unsolicited by inquiry on her part, the stranger volunteered more information with regard to the Count.

“It was said,” he continued;—“perhaps living in the neighbourhood, you know something of it,—that my friend was to have been

married to one of Sir William Mandeville's daughters ; but I heard from his own lips there was no foundation for the report ; indeed, he laughed at the idea."

Agnes stared wildly at her companion ; was he a demon ! or what was he, thus come to torment her ? What could he suppose the Count de Meurville's affairs were to her, unless he knew whom he addressed ; and if he did, merciful Heavens ! was she a creature to excite malevolence ? Did that wasted form require any additional woe to bend it to the earth ; that heart one added throb to hasten its annihilation for ever ?

The sight of her sister Arabella approaching was a welcome sight to Agnes, and she would have run to meet her ; but, exhausted by her walk, she was unequal to it, and only came up to her at the same time with the stranger, who still continued to walk beside her.

“ I am afraid,” said the latter, as bursting into tears Agnes hid her face on the neck of her sister, “ I am afraid I was most unintentionally the means of alarming this young lady, for she has appeared agitated ever since she met me.”

“ She is in a very delicate state of health,” returned Arabella ; more at a loss to conjecture who the stranger was, than surprized at the agitation of her sister, which had of late been often occasioned by the most trifling circumstances.

“ That renders it more unfortunate,” said the other, “ that I should have alarmed her.”

“ Tell him to go away,” murmured Agnes, clinging to her sister ; “ tell him but to go.”

“ I was taking a sketch of this lovely place,” said the stranger, “ when that young lady met me ; and having been the means of frightening

her, fully punishes me for my presumption, in having come here without leave ; but I will no longer intrude, and with a thousand apologies for this unhappy rencontre, allow me to wish you a good evening."

So saying, the stranger left them, and was in a few minutes out of sight. Arabella then turned to her sister for explanation of the whole, which she gave her, so far as saying that her agitation had been occasioned by suddenly meeting him, and by the free manner in which he had entered into conversation with her ; but she carefully abstained from any allusion to what had been the principal subject of the latter ; and when her sister remarked his foreign accent, did not even inform her of the country from whence he came : for Germany could not be pronounced by Agnes without some betraying emotion, and that might produce a torrent of suspicions even to the dull comprehension of

Arabella, most unpleasant to her sister, who as she had suffered so long in secret, determined on continuing to do so, and betraying the cause of her griefs to none, unless indeed it were to *him*, who in the world alone could alleviate them.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Live while ye may, yet happy pair,
Enjoy till I return—short pleasures
For long woes are to succeed.”

MILTON.

No revenge has been pronounced so bitter as that prompted by love turned into hatred, and the demoniac manœuvring which Annette Dettinghorffe, disappointed in her hopes of inspiring affection in the Count de Meurville, was now exercising against him, stood in support of this assertion. It was through her means that Agnes was led to believe the latter unfeeling and ungrateful; he who, of all mankind, least deserved such an imputation; he who, if he had, would to her least have proved it; and that

the Count, in his turn, was compelled to entertain similar suspicions of the creature whom he still loved to idolatry, and for whose sake—nothing but her rectitude had prevented him long ago renouncing his country, his connexions, his God ! Annette effected this by a train of stratagem, which perhaps no other head than her own would have been perverted enough to suggest, no other heart than her own vile enough to approve.

From the period of her being betrothed to the Count de Meurville, which had not taken place till she was past twenty, to that of the latter's departure for England, though he had never displayed that affection due, she thought, from an affianced husband to the partner of his future life, he had never wounded her by that extreme indifference, which all his letters from the latter country manifested, and for the cause of which, when she heard of the beauty of the Miss Mandevilles, she was not at a loss

to account. Some brighter eyes than her own had proved his attraction. In some more snowy bosom did her De Meurville's heart lie buried; and maddened by this suspicion, which every thing tended to confirm, Annette, in correspondence with her lover, alternately resorted to indignation and blandishments. Sometimes he was the most cruel, the most ungenerous, the most worthless of men; at others the dearest, the most amiable, the most worthy to be beloved! Whatever he was, it was as little in the power of Annette's hatred to render him miserable, as in that of her love to make him happy; and he smiled at both, determining, however, not to excite the former while he discouraged the latter; but such a middle course was not to be preserved with her. He should hate, or he should idolize her; he should be her husband, or her direst foe. The same spot should contain them, or the same world should not; and to ascertain which

of these opposites would be his fate, she determined, at last, on herself going to England and watching his proceedings. To England therefore she came, and saw the confirmation of all her fears; whether she beheld Agnes and De Meurville in the midst of the crowded church, the splendid opera, or the thronged theatre, they still appeared as lovers to each other, at least in her eyes, and

“ ’Twas sight hateful,—sight tormenting.”

How speediest to part them—how most effectually to destroy their attachment, became her only anxiety. For accomplishing the latter she relied on her influence at Court, and was not disappointed.

The Count, at her secret instigation, was recalled; but to make his recall productive of the effect she desired, it was now necessary to intercept the correspondence which, as she foresaw, ensued between himself and his beloved. This was a matter of no small difficulty, for De Meurville took all his letters for Agnes to the

office himself, and, unless she could make acquaintance with some one in it, who for a bribe would secrete them, there seemed no apparent method of her getting at their possession. This however she effected; and every epistle of the Count to his English fair, as well as those of the latter to him, were in future consigned to her hands.

The perusal of them fully enlightened Annette as to the hopes they both entertained of her being induced to marry some one else; and though that was now her own resolve, yet she determined to give De Meurville no reason to suspect the same. On the contrary, she endeavoured from the moment of his arrival, to prove to him that indifference on his part had not alienated her affection, and that she was not only ready, but anxious to become his wife. Disgusted with her servility, weary of her importunities, the Count, to avoid her presence, and determined not to marry her, proposed that they should

correspond; and Annette affecting to attribute this to an excess of affection, which in her presence he could not express, consented with delight.

“Yes, write to me, my De Meurville,” she said, “if your lips cannot utter what your heart must feel for one who idolizes you; who, during your long absence has never ceased to think of you, and who would rather be your mistress than another man’s wife.”

In short, they maintained a correspondence, which was the very point to which Annette wished, thinking, that as it would, at her request, be carried on in English, and as she had, on some frivolous pretext, requested him to avoid all local subjects, as well as a mention of her name, she might occasionally substitute one of these frigid epistles for the many fond ones she detained from Agnes, and elicit by this means, some reply from the latter that could be safely forwarded to the Count de Meurville, as bearing marks of indifference which would irritate him

to renounce her: but in this scheme she was disappointed; for, different as were these letters from what Agnes had ever before received, they were too welcome to her, after his apparently long silence, not to be received with a pleasure, and replied to with a kindness most provoking to Annette, who determined that this should not remain the case, and that she would at last extort some answer from her, which would prove a death-blow to De Meurville's love, and by showing Agnes indifferent to him, satisfactorily account for the silence of which she was every day afraid the Count would take effectual means to discover the cause; for his letters, all of which Annette had in her possession, were certainly written in such strains of tenderness, as he must suppose Agnes turned to marble if she could be insensible to.

As a method of accomplishing the plan she purposed, Mademoiselle Dettinghorffe artfully changed the style of her own epistles to De

Meurville, and from expressions of adoration, which had compelled his gratitude, though not excited his love, descended to reproaches which at once annihilated the former, and precluded any possibility of his ever entertaining the latter, while it effected the end she desired of producing one from him calculated to cut to the heart her to whom, on receiving, Annette immediately dispatched them; and finally of eliciting from Agnes a letter, which Annette fearlessly allowed to reach De Meurville, as it contained but a request that their correspondence might cease for ever. What the Count de Meurville must feel at the apparently unaccountable conduct of Agnes, may be imagined; what he would have felt, had he known that she on whom he doted was the victim of an artful woman's cruelty, and had nearly lost her life, as we recounted in a previous chapter, by the reception of a letter intended for Annette, cannot yet be known.

Pride sustained him in the one case, for he could not but suppose that absence had lessened his interest in Agnes's heart, and probably induced her to bestow it on some one else ; but the other would be a grief admissible of no such consolation, and life, love, every blessing he would deem too little to devote to a creature who for him had suffered so much. Whatever influenced the conduct of Agnes however, De Meurville determined once more to visit England, and judge of its justice ; once more to behold the country in which he had enjoyed so much happiness ; and the woman whom he had loved so well."

CHAPTER XX.

“ The proudest, loftiest, must confess
The sweetest power—the power to bless !”

ACCORDING to his annual custom, and notwithstanding the contempt expressed by his Lady at the idea, Lord Glenallan proposed, a short time after his arrival at their Castle, in Scotland, to give a *fête champêtre* to the tenantry, which should conclude with a dance on the lawn, or in the hall of Glenallan, and be graced by the presence, if not joined in by the company stopping at his house. To all but the Marchioness, the prospect of this day afforded pleasure ; and when it arrived, when, partaking

of the excellent cheer prepared for them, a thousand happy faces were arranged in different groups before tables spread for their reception ; all but her Ladyship mingled with delight among them, and walking from one to the other entered with condescending familiarity into their mirth. Now a Noble Peer whispered something arch to a pretty smiling girl, and now a blushing peasant paid his rustic compliment to a high born belle, as she helped him to some dainty he was too modest to touch himself. Over the whole, Lady Glenallan, from a window in the drawing-room, cast an eye of the most profound contempt : the sight of her Lord bustling about, his countenance heated but beaming with benevolence, turned her sick ; while even Lord Arabin, her ever perfect Earl of Arabin, had, she thought, looked more in his element, and would now, paying attentions to her, than seeming so vastly amused with the wit of a parcel of country girls.

But how Isabel, her refined, her sentimental-looking Isabel, could enjoy the throng, seemed most surprizing! that she did was very apparent, for Lady Glenallan had never seen her in better spirits in the midst of a crowded ball-room in London, than she was now in the midst of rural festivity, romping with a pretty child among the hay, or flirting with Douglas under the umbrageous foliage of an oak. The fact was, Lady Isabella Ireton had a craving vanity, which, while it received the food of admiration, made her happy in any situation; and playing the elegant hoyden of an hay-field was as likely to obtain her compliments, as dancing at a birth-night, or languishing at an opera. Now the Marchioness Glenallan, on the contrary, had a preponderance of pride, which would have prevented her courting the very popularity she would have delighted in.

It was with no very amiable looks and words, that the latter received the Marquess, who, out

of pure good-nature, came in more than once to try and prevail on her to join them on the lawn, and finally she answered him with an asperity which prevented any future intrusions on her Ladyship's dignity, at least from her husband: it was reserved for a more successful pleader, in the person of Lord Arabin, to induce her to change her resolution of not appearing.

"My dear, lovely Lady Glenallan," said the Earl, with that freedom which a man will venture to use, when he knows it is not displeasing, "why will you not come down to us, it would delight these people so, indeed it would, and you must, you really must," he added, gently drawing her hand in one of his own.

"No," said her Ladyship faintly, "indeed I can't; don't ask me, Lord Arabin."

"But why not? why won't you?" said the Earl, in an insinuating tone, "what can I say to induce you?"

“Oh! your request alone would be sufficient,” replied she; “but—”

“But what?” my angel, he looked as if he could have added; “what should prevent you; why will you deprive us of the happiness of seeing you?”

“The happiness, my Lord,” she repeated; “you can, at least, answer for but one being deprived of happiness.”

“That I can answer for one being to a greater extent than all the rest, is certain, Lady Glenallan, but that others are too, I am convinced.”

“I don’t know what I might have done,” said the Marchioness, “had not Lord Glenallan so bored and tormented me about it, but as it is, I know it would just gratify him if I went out, and I hate the idea of its doing that.”

“Amiable wife!” thought Lord Arabin to himself. “But lovely Lady Glenallan,” he

said, "will you punish others for his sins? will you not be intreated by the brother of Isabel?"

"If I thought they 'd care to see the child," observed Lady Glenallan, in an hesitating tone, "I 'd take out James—but—"

"Oh, they would, indeed they would," cried Lord Arabin. "Let me ring for the nurse; let's have his little lordship and take him out with his beautiful mamma."

So saying, the Earl rang, and unchecked by any thing but the looks of the Marchioness, which still augured doubtful approbation, desired Lord Mantalpine to be brought.

In a few minutes, and supported in the arms of his nurse, was brought the beautiful little Earl, who, but lately awoke from sleep, was in no very amiable mood, and continued to rub his great dark eyes and rosy cheeks, as in sulken scrutiny he fixed the former alternately on his mother and Lord Arabin.

“My child!” said her Ladyship, extending her arms to receive her boy—but unaccustomed to the honour of being caressed by her, he clung to his nurse. “You must come to your mamma, James,” she said, “or she’ll be quite jealous.”

“Come, now, you must go to my Lady,” said the nurse, extricating his little arms from about her; “indeed you must, my lord; so don’t be so sulky.”

“Come to me, Mantalpine!” cried Lord Arabin; “you and I are great friends, and we’ll have nothing to say to mamma.”

“Oh no, he’ll go to my Lady,” said the nurse, as the little nobleman held out his arms to the latter, but kept his eyes fixed on a glittering watch-chain the Earl of Arabin suspended before him, and for which, when withdrawn from him by the Earl’s going into the next room to get Lady Glenallan’s shawl and bonnet, he was putting up his coral lips to cry,

but a promise of his black hat and feathers restored something like complacency to the brow of the little Earl, and in a sort of sullen dignity he was presently taken out on the lawn in the arms of his beautiful mother; at sight of whom, looking so lovely, so innocent, so unlike any thing but a creature in whose bosom dwelt every virtue, the people gave a shout of joy! her health was drank with enthusiastic cheers; and as she held up her interesting child, they almost, in tears of gratitude at her condescension, rent heaven and earth with prayers for that of Lord Mantalpine, who, unaware of being the object of all this commotion, looked about him

“ With something like displeased surprise,

and apparently was not sorry when the ringing of the dinner-bell took him with all the company into the Castle. But Lady Glenallan seemed deeply affected by manifestations of regard she had done nothing to deserve, and lingering with

Lord Arabin somewhat behind the rest, thanked the people near her for their good wishes. "It delighted her," she said, "to receive them, it should be her study to deserve them; she would remember them while she had life."

When the Marchioness could occasionally appear so amiable, it only made it the more lamentable that she should almost invariably appear the contrary; that education should ever have spoil'd what nature once made so delightful. But this evening, nature or something more efficient than nature, seemed to triumph over the habitual hauteur of Lady Glenallan, and to the surprize of all, she proposed herself opening the dance, for which in the evening the people assembled in the hall, and did so with an affability which charmed the beholders. For after all, to see a creature exalted in rank, in talents, in beauty, in all that can elevate one human creature above another, mingling pro-

miscuously with her inferiors, had in it something noble; something which inclined one to forget her pride of those distinctions, and remember only how great they were.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Proud has been my fatal passion,
Proud my injured heart shall be ;
While each thought and inclination
Proves that heart was formed for thee.

Not one sigh shall tell my story,
Not one tear my cheek shall stain ;
Silent grief shall be my glory,
Grief that stoops not to complain.”

PURSUANT to his intention, and at the expiration of rather more than a year since he had left it, the Count de Meurville prepared again to visit England, though under very different circumstances from when he had taken leave of it: then he had been unhappy indeed from parting with Agnes, and from the little prospect there seemed to be of his being freed from the tie that bound him ; but love had soothed

him, and hope had whispered consolation. Now he was released from his engagement by the marriage of Annette with another, but "hope and her fanciful visions were fled." Agnes was certainly the betrothed, if not the property of some happier man, and her De Meurville, declining in health and spirits, sunk under the misery which such a conviction occasioned; though he was too proud to own it even to himself, and to her he thought he would sooner have died than done it; but he did not know that changed, unhappy, dying, was his once beloved Agnes, and as incapable of triumphing over his wretchedness, as she had ever been of creating it. On the contrary, seeing her intended marriage with the Duke of Westennera announced in an English paper, he pictured her to himself as forgetful of her past love, and anticipating with delight an alliance which would exalt her next to royalty, surrounded with bridal paraphernalia, and enjoying bril-

liant prospects, regardless whether they comprehended matrimonial happiness.

Little, in forming these suspicions, did De Meurville appreciate Agnes, or rather more did he recollect her in them as the daughter of Lady Mandeville, and the sister of the Countess of Ossulton, than as the creature whose innocence had first fascinated his heart, and whose fondness had finally enslaved it. But however changed he might imagine Agnes in disposition towards himself, he never could have imagined to meet a sister of hers, so lost, so fallen, as it was his lot, when stopping at Paris on his way to England, to discover Charlotte, who, from the time of leaving her husband, had fallen into the most abandoned courses, and who, when she was seen by the Count de Meurville, was lying unattended but by the people of the house, and apparently half delirious in an upper apartment of an hotel. It was evening when the Count at her request entered it, and

the shock he received at seeing Charlotte, whom he had left in England a blooming bride, now extended on a bed,

“Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,”

her countenance ghastly emaciated, her large dark eyes rolling with frenzy around her and finally settling on him with a look of wild recognition, was very great; for Charlotte, though destitute of the qualities which excite love, and of the delicacy which De Meurville, like all men who have seen much of women, most admire in them, had been dear to him as the sister of Agnes. And to see her, to see any thing which bore affinity to that once loved creature, so degraded, was melancholy. De Meurville could have wept at the sight, but pity was somewhat lost in surprize and horror by the manner of Charlotte.

“Is it you? Is it De Meurville?” she said in a hurried tone, as he entered, and she pulled aside the bed-curtains. “Ah, it is! they told

me right," she added quickly, answering herself. "But why do you look so amazed? What do you see in me?"

"Oh Charlotte, is it thus, and here we meet?" he answered, taking her wasted hand in his.

"'Tis here, and thus," she replied; "where else, how else should we? We have met in scenes of joy, indeed; but joy is fleeting! We meet in sorrow now, and sorrow will be for me eternal! But ere you return to that vile place, that hell on earth—that scene of sin—that abode of deception to which you are going, listen to my last commands. Bear my dying curse to my mother; tell her you saw her child on the bed of death; and that on that last receptacle she cursed her—she loathed her very name—she hated life, and her that gave it; tell her, tell her, De Meurville—"

"Oh cease, in mercy cease," said the Count,

leaning his head against the bedstead, "I cannot bear this."

"No, because it is truth, and you know it truth," said Charlotte wildly. "Go to Lady Ossulton and ask her if it is not. Go to Arabella, that wretched degraded girl, see if she can say otherwise; and then tell Agnes Mandeville, as she values her salvation, she must not reside with her mother. Tell her, De Meurville, that not content with ruining her in this world, she will ruin her for ever in the next."

"These may be truths," said De Meurville, almost groaning with agony, "but they are such as I wish not to hear. Is it to the betrothed husband of your sister you would make confessions so dreadful?"

"Of my sister!" repeated Charlotte. "Is it of Agnes that you speak?"

The Count made a sign of assent, but not by words.

“ Oh, she will be happy then,” cried Charlotte, “ for she will be with you. She will be a blessed, blessed creature ! for you will be her husband—her protector—her friend.”

“ All, all !” murmured the Count, “ if she still permit it : but let me be the last at least to you, let me, as a friend, Charlotte.”

“ No, no !” interrupted the latter, quickly. “ I want no friend. Reserve for your happier Agnes all the admonition you would vainly bestow on me ; she will listen in submission, but I cannot ; she will live by them and you, but I am lost for ever. And now leave me, leave me, De Meurville, for you are distracted, and I am undone ; you never can restore me to peace, and I wish not to deprive you of it.”

“ For the present I will leave you,” inaudibly articulated the Count, returning the convulsive clasp of her hand with an averted face, “ but I will see you again in a short time.”

“ Not to-night—not to-night,” returned Char-

lotte, quickly——” And for her another morning never rose.

* * * * *

It may easily be imagined that this distressing interview was little calculated to raise the spirits of De Meurville; and that on the contrary, it increased the gloomy anticipations he could not but indulge with respect to his Agnes. For if Lady Mandeville were indeed the fiend, and Hermitage the hell, which Charlotte, who best knew both had declared, what might not have happened to his beloved, what might she not have been induced in desperation to do! “Ah, Agnes,” he mentally exclaimed, “how true have my prophecies proved, how speedy, how very speedy has been their fulfilment.”

But to what extent they had been fulfilled De Meurville was yet to know, and could not, till he had been himself at Hermitage, where he was invited, as soon as his arrival was announced in London, and for which, having no

business in the latter, he immediately set out.

It was on a beautiful Sunday evening, at the beginning of August, that De Meurville stopped in a village, situate about half a mile from the Castle, and being fatigued from his journey, as well as depressed in spirits, he determined on remaining at the inn until dusk, when he could walk to Hermitage: amusing himself in the meantime by watching from a window the people who were entering a church opposite for divine service, and recognizing in many of them acquaintances of former times, eyes that had often brightened, and lips that had often laughed, when in his morning rides or evening walk with the Mandevilles he had called forth their animation by careless gaiety. But it was not till the bell had nearly ceased to toll, that there entered the churchyard three persons more calculated to arrest the attention of De Meurville than all the rest, for

they were at a glance three of the Mandeville family, and one he suspected his Agnes, but she was so enveloped in a veil as to leave it doubtful, till, while the others moved on, apparently at her desire, to the church, she stopped to relieve a beggar-woman who had solicited her charity, and then throwing back the veil, which had concealed her features, De Meurville recognized the coral lips and violet eyes of Agnes, but around those lips there played no smiles, and those eyes were violets wet with dew.

“Alas!” exclaimed the Count, “if Agnes Mandeville weeps, what floods of tears are not prepared for the Duchess of Westennera! If on the eve of bridal joys you sigh, what will you not do at their consummation? Oh, Agnes! it was these arms that were destined to receive thee; it was these eyes that should for ever have chased tears from thine!” But while he spoke, Agnes joined her companions and entered the church, and he was left but

to gaze on the spot where she had stood, asking his heart if it were in reality her, or a vision he had beheld.

The sight had, as may be imagined, disqualified De Meurville for any thing but thought, and he threw down a book, which a moment before he had taken up, and began to pace the room. But it seemed too limited to contain him, and before he was aware of it, he had wandered out on the road which, shady, deserted, and breathing the balmy fragrance of summer, had in it at the same time something depressing—something which rather reminded De Meurville of the past, than cheered him as to the future: and the lowing of cattle, the occasional notes of birds, and distant whistle of the shepherd, were all at that moment melancholy sounds! To escape from them, De Meurville, scarcely heeding where he went, turned into a cottage, before which flourished a beautiful little garden, and sink-

ing on a seat, asked permission to rest after his walk.

“And welcome, Sir,” said a decent-looking woman, laying aside a Bible which she had been reading, and handing him a better chair than that which he had taken.

“I am very well seated,” said the Count, “thank you, and now don’t let me disturb you.”

“No disturbance at all, Sir,” returned she, “I was but watching our house here, Sir, while the rest are gone to church.”

“Church seems well attended in the evening,” observed De Meurville; “I was looking at the congregation entering just now.”

“Oh, very, Sir!” returned the woman; “much better than it was last summer; for now the Baronet’s family generally go, which is a great check against other people staying away. Do you know the Baronet’s family, Sir?” “Too well,” hovered on the lips of the Count, “but very

well," was his reply. "I am going on a visit to them."

"Perhaps you haven't seen them for a long time, Sir? and indeed if you haven't you'll see a sad change—all the beautiful young ladies are married, or going to be."

"Not all, I think," said the Count, smiling; "but even so, is that so sad a change?"

"Then to my mind it is," returned the woman. "I never see a young thing going to be married, who has hitherto had no cares but about her beauty, and her dress, and her accomplishments, but what I say to myself, 'Ah! she'll have many more! and had much better remain as she is.'"

"I hope you don't preach that doctrine to all the young ladies about here," said the Count, "or the gentlemen will have no chance."

"It would be of little use for me, Sir, they'll always have too much; and if they had not themselves, there's mothers to recommend them

—as indeed poor Miss Agnes Mandeville is an instance. She, Sir—but perhaps you know her—the loveliest, sweetest creature that ever eyes were set upon, who it's a sin to make do any thing she doesn't like, is going to be married to a great duke, by my Lady's desire; for as for the poor thing herself, she would as soon marry the greatest wretch living."

"Is he so very disagreeable," inquired the Count, "that all his rank and fortune will not counterbalance it?"

"In Miss Agnes's eyes I am very sure he is, Sir," said she; "for she's fretting herself to death at the very idea of marrying him; and from the very first of his coming there she always hated him. And when she and her sister, Miss Arabella, used to come here on an evening, and I'd say, 'Well, Miss Agnes, when you'll be marrying his Grace of Westennera,' she'd look so grave, though she'd be smiling a moment before; 'and when you hear of

that,' she'd say, 'you may expect to hear of any miracle.' Those were the very words, she said, Sir; but indeed it wasn't often that she'd come here, for she wasn't equal to it, and now I never see her, except it be once in a way at church. They say she's going off fast in a decline, and indeed it's a melancholy fate for a beautiful girl like Miss Mandeville."

"Most melancholy," observed the Count, with a sigh, "but I should hope—"

"Alas! Sir, for her there's no hope! for it isn't that she doesn't love his Grace of Westenera only, but that she loves another, they say, and the most accomplished gentleman that ever eyes were set on. He came from foreign parts, and was with them this time two years; not that I saw him myself, for I was away that summer, but I hear he was the loveliest-looking man that could be fancied, and doted, above all things, on Miss Agnes."

“Pity that he should not have married her,” observed the Count. “But did her father and mother know of her attachment?”

“Little matter if they did, Sir, for the Baronet would not have heeded it, nor my Lady, but as it might interfere with her plans; and in truth I believe they did not, it was only the tattle of the hall, but not the less truth for all that.”

De Meurville sighed, and asked, “if the Countess of Ossulton had been in the neighbourhood lately.”

“Not she, Sir, indeed, ever since she has been married; and report says she’s not so happy as she ought to be. Oh! it was a sorry day in which she was ever given to that villain! for villain he was, whether he was Earl of Ossulton or King of England. And she hadn’t been married an hour to him before he got quite cross at her for not hastening to go away from her own father’s house. And

she, poor thing ! seeming so delicate, and dressed so beautifully all in white, for it was summer time, just this last year, got quite agitated, and before she was fairly off she fainted away three times ; but my Lady, her mother, didn't mind, and said 'twas only nervous, that the journey would do her good. So she and my lord set off, and from that day to this, never a sight have we had of them ; for to see him, indeed, nobody would give much ; but she was such a charming young lady !”

“ She was indeed,” said the Count.

“ Then there was Miss Charlotte, Sir, a beautiful black-eyed girl, who used to ride so well, and had such spirits, she married in London, this year and a half nearly ago ; and true enough, it was an unlucky affair.”

“ Most unfortunate,” interrupted the Count, with a profound sigh ; “ I heard all about it.”

“ Well, Sir, and perhaps you know,” said

his communicative companion, "that Mr. Clermont is now an archdeacon."

"No," said the Count, rising, "that's news, but if he was a bishop, he could scarce make you a longer visitation than I have been doing."

"Not longer than welcome, Sir; and begging your pardon, it has been very short; but, perhaps, before you go, you'd take a little fruit, some of our apricots or mulberries."

De Meurville took something, to have an excuse for giving her money, and presently left the cottage, to prepare for going up to Hermitage; at which place, however, he did not arrive till dusk. When he went there, the lights, the noise, the bustle, the crowd of servants, all recalled past times, and it was with difficulty he could prevent a formal announcement of himself, but against this he was determined, and made his way, unattended, to the drawing-room, previous to entering which, he met Sir William, who, very much broken in ap-

pearance, and rather low in spirits, was sitting with a newspaper in an adjoining room.

The Baronet expressed great pleasure at seeing De Meurville, who was always a favourite with him; but after a little conversation, desired him to join his friends in the next apartment. The Count obeyed, and amidst the number which, sitting or standing in groups, filled it, the servants with tea-trays in every direction, and the buzz of conversation, which was not interrupted by the music of the piano, nor by the sweet voice which was warbling "Oh, had I the wings of a dove!" he entered unperceived by all but Lady Mandeville, who was standing near the door, and who professed the greatest delight at seeing him: while speaking to her Ladyship Agnes came over to the latter, and without noticing who was standing beside her, whispered some request, to which her mother only replied by asking her if she had forgot her cousin. Quick as lightning Agnes

raised her eyes, and when they met those of Clifford, past, present, future — all swam in wild confusion before her; all that she had been; all that she was; all that she might have been, rushed to her recollection, and with every pulse beating, every feeling excited, she stood for a moment the trembling, lovely, blushing girl she had been when first she felt the pressure of De Meurville's hand, when first she heard the whisper of De Meurville's heart. But he spoke, and her agitation calmed. He made some slight inquiry after her health, and her beautiful colour was fled; for it was in a manner so chilling as to make her forget any remembrance of their having been lovers in conviction of their now being any thing else, and Agnes could have cried as she heard him. Fortunately Lady Mandeville's attention was attracted to something else, and she did not notice this extraordinary meeting; on the contrary, sup-

posing they must have a great deal to say to each other, she turned away and left them together.

“Are your brothers here?” inquired De Meurville, as still holding the burning hand of Agnes in his, they walked to the upper end of the room.

“Yes, Sidney’s there, he does not see you,” returned she, calling to him as she spoke, “and Clermont was here a short time ago.”

In a moment Mr. Mandeville crossed the room, and shook hands with his friend, expressing the greatest pleasure at seeing him, and the most animated hopes that he was in better health. De Meurville professed himself to be so, though his looks strangely contradicted the words, and declared that Surrey would effect any restoration yet wanting.

Arabella now came up to speak to her cousin, and in a short time he was recognized by almost every one in the room, except the Duke of

Westennera, who was standing alone at the piano where Agnes had been playing, and regarding the Count with that sort of indefinite jealousy he felt of every one likely to interfere between himself and his beloved.

An introduction was presently proposed between his Grace and the Count, and it was not till that moment that Agnes was completely overcome; agitated, she released her hand from De Meurville, who, as if unconsciously, had continued to hold it, and fell behind the rest. But it was not, to her unutterable mortification, till De Meurville's eyes had met her starting tears, and beheld them and herself with that sort of compassionating glance with which we should view a fallen creature; "I pity you," it plainly said, and unable to bear pity where she had once inspired adoration, Agnes left the room for her own. In solitude there she at first gave way to grief the most unbounded; but something like pride presently

checked it, and how to act towards De Meurville, who had taken so extraordinary a step as to place himself in the very centre of a scene of which once the bare idea would have filled him with agony, became sole occupier of her thoughts; that a perpetual warfare between her pride and her feelings must be kept up, was plain, and did the attempt cost her her life she was determined on making it; for to appear still to love a man who, she had reason to believe, was the husband of another woman, and who had declared himself weary of her love, was too humiliating.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ I wish’d to see that face again,
Although ’twere changed to me;
I thought it not such maddening pain,
As ne’er to look on thee.”

From Agnes Mandeville to Catharine Morton.

MY DEAREST CATHARINE,

WITH that pleasure I must ever feel in obliging you, mingled with that melancholy I must also feel when the intelligence I have to communicate is unpleasing, I comply with your request of being written to as soon after De Meurville’s arrival here as possible. On Sunday evening last, then, he came, and, though you will scarcely believe it, he was, I assure you, some time in the drawing-room without

my being aware of it—without my being aware of it, who have so often felt his presence before I beheld it. What a revolution! but unfortunately one rather caused by the apathy of languor than the annihilation of love; for when I did recognize him it was with a sensation of joy bordering on frenzy. I could have fallen down and worshipped him had not his manner checked any such enthusiasm; but it was, indeed, of a nature to recall me to myself, and happy was I that not a syllable of the joy which overflowed my heart escaped my lips, for it would have caused my never-ending regret. On the contrary, though I was, as I observed before, delighted to the last degree at seeing him, I had rather the appearance of one stupefied with surprize; and indeed De Meurville must have a vanity in his composition, which, among all his faults, I never yet discovered, if he could suppose that I loved him still; nor do I farther than from the remem-

brance of how much he once loved me. But were I totally indifferent to him, it was not, you may imagine, without the most heartfelt anguish and shame that I could fancy him, supposing me attached to the Duke of Westennera, which introduced to the latter as my future husband, he must to a certain degree conclude. No ; I could not sustain the moment of their introduction, but quitted the room, leaving De Meurville to form what suppositions he chose ; that they were unfavourable to me, I cannot doubt, but I did not return to the drawing-room to be mortified by their expression.

When we met the next morning I had a clearer view of Clifford than the night before, and he looks to me very ill, though he is or affects to be, for I cannot altogether think them real, in good spirits, and talks of the past with unconcern, and of the future with indifference.

After breakfast he, with the Duke of Westennera, and two or three others, went to some

paces in the neighbourhood, and not returning till late, I saw nothing of him again till dinner-time, at which there being a great deal of company, we in no way came in contact, nor did we during the evening. Indeed, De Meurville I am convinced, without systematically appearing to do so, studiously avoids me, and you may be very sure I do not throw myself in his way; on the contrary, I endeavour to appear occupied with every body else; and never did the Duke of Westennera receive so much attention from me as he has done since the return of De Meurville; in fact, I feel spirited to any conduct which may prove my indifference to the latter, and anticipate my marriage with the resignation a culprit would his departure from a world in which he had nothing left to live for. It may at least probe the heart I once vainly endeavoured to please—if De Meurville has a heart.

* * * * *

Oh ! he has ! he has a heart, wheresoever, howsoever, it may have been buried : and in De Meurville's bosom, though love may be obliterated, feeling remains ; though the world may contend, nature will be for ever victorious ! The other evening, he, my sister Rhoda, and I, were standing at one of the drawing-room windows, looking at that view of Abbeville which you so much admire, and which, illumined by a brilliant setting sun, appeared most beautiful, when the Duke of Westennera came up to me, and began rallying me about different young men then in the room. Disgusted with his facetiousness, I was about to turn away, but an inclination to make one lingering trial, if I yet possessed any influence over De Meurville, prevented me, and in reply to his Grace's question, of whether I should not regret all these dashing young fellows, when I found myself married to an old man like him ; I replied, "That the happy wife of the Duke of Westen-

nera, could entertain no regrets of any kind." Fixing my eyes, as I spoke, on those of De Meurville, which were in a moment suffused with tears, though he instantly averted them, and continued to look out of the window, as if at some far distant object; neither his Grace nor my sister noticed this agitation, but I, in doing so, felt my triumph more than complete. A few minutes after, unobserved, as I thought, by him, I proposed to Arabella that we should take a walk, and both of us stole out of the room for the purpose, but we had scarcely proceeded as far as the shrubbery when De Meurville came out also, and asked permission to join us. Arabella instantly consented, but I began to complain of a headache, and was about to return in, when the strangeness, if not the rudeness, of this proceeding struck me, and I yielded to the solicitations of my sister to continue my walk, leaving the burden of the conversation on

her and De Meurville, the latter of whom said scarce any thing, so that our walk was not altogether very lively. The first thing that created any sensation in it, was our stopping at a cottage to see an old woman who had been very ill, and whom we were in the habit of visiting. As she was confined to her bed, it was necessary to go upstairs to see her, and the room above being very close, Arabella wanted to dissuade me from following her up, but having no inclination for a *tête-à-tête* with De Meurville, I insisted on doing so, the consequence I feared ensuing, of my becoming so faint that I was obliged instantly to return.

To my unspeakable relief, I found below the grandchild of the old woman, who had just come in, and seizing the poor child, before she was aware of it, I asked her to come to the garden and pull me some flowers. De Meurville was leaning against the door, and as I

passed him, he took my hand, "Agnes!" said he, in somewhat the tone of former days, "De Meurville," returned I coldly, and moved on; but he followed me, and presently began talking to me in a low tone. He said, "he was very unhappy! that I had made him of men most miserable; that he knew not what he had done, to become so hateful in my eyes, that he desired but to know?"

I was not prepared for this: I did not think it was in man to be so plausible, and yet so perfidious, so cruel, and yet so deceitful. Tears began to fall from my eyes, and he perceived it. "Are these tears on the eve of bridal joys!" he said: "are these proofs of your being happy, Agnes?"

"I shall never more be happy," answered I.

"It was not so," he continued, "that you expressed yourself a short time ago; but perhaps it was to gratify the Duke of Westenera's affection you spoke otherwise?"

“Affection is false*!” returned I, withdrawing from him the hand he took.

“Who taught you that sad lesson?” asked De Meurville.

“He who fully proved its truth,” said I. And my sister, Arabella, coming out of the cottage at that minute, I went forward to meet her, leaving De Meurville lost in thought, and apparently musing on my words. How extraordinary is his conduct! Sometimes I think mine must have been misrepresented to him when he was abroad. But why did he not seek an explanation? Whose lips should have more power to persuade than those of his Agnes? To what arms should he fly for consolation, but to hers, in whose bosom he once swore for ever to confide his sorrows and his joys. But oftener I think that a report of his being attached to some one else is true, and

* A reply of Queen Elizabeth's, when solicited at a masquerade to dance with a lady personifying “Affection,” and supposed to be made in allusion to the Earl of Essex's ingratitude.

this idea more than any other distracts me. Yet why should I care to whom De Meurville addresses love, since he neither ever will, or ever can address it again to me? Whether Clifford suffers in mind I cannot tell you; but in health he certainly does: and you never saw a man look so wretchedly! It softens my feelings of indignation against him; and if I thought his illness was in any way occasioned by sorrow for his conduct towards me, would for ever annihilate them. In truth, I feel myself too near the verge of this life to cherish any animosities, more especially against the man whom I once loved beyond the world. Farewell! my dearest Catharine! May a happier lot ever be your's than is that of your Agnes; and around your marriage-day may there play brighter visions than are destined to illumine mine!

Believe me, &c. &c.

AGNES MANDEVILLE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“The mask is off—the charm is wrought,
And Selim to his heart has caught,
In blushes more than ever bright,
His Nourmahal, his harem’s light.”

A WEEK had elapsed since the arrival of the Count de Meurville at Hermitage, and as every day brought him nearer to that in which he was to lose all hopes of Agnes for ever, every day found him declining in health and spirits. He would have sought an explanation with her, but she seemed to him to avoid it, and in fact Agnes did, for she did not suppose any thing could pass between them but what would serve uselessly to agitate her, and since her fate was inevitable, to have no farther remembrancer, that it

might have been different, than the unavoidable one in her own bosom, was desirable. Such a reserve, on her part, made De Meurville wretched, and on the day but one before Agnes's marriage, when, from being ill, he did not join the family, he took the resolution of writing to her, and did so, as follows :—

“Indifferent as I am whether this letter, the last, perhaps, which I shall ever dictate, is read by Agnes Mandeville or the Duchess of Westenera ; I yet address the former, as thinking it probable I may not have time to write to the latter, and that to die without some vindication of my conduct, would be unjust to myself, whether it would be desirable to her or not ; casting aside, therefore, that pride which might once have prevented my condescending to an apparently undesired explanation, but which on the verge of eternity can no longer interfere to prevent my performance of any duty, I sit down to explain the circumstances which have actua-

ted my proceedings from the time I left England, and then leave it to your own heart to determine whether they have justified yours. I left this country, wretched, indeed, at being separated from you, but secure in your affection, cheered by the prospect of hearing from, and writing to you, and blessed in the idea of one day possessing you: I return to it with every hope blasted, every anticipation disappointed, every blessing fled!

“ Judge, Miss Mandeville, what must have been the power that could effect this, and then learn that it was only your’s; that, as in this world you alone could render me happy, so in this world you alone could make me miserable; that you have done so most completely, I will not now add to your sufferings, or claim your pity, by declaring. The former I should not be human if I wished to increase; the latter, after having aspired to far higher distinctions, you cannot wonder if I would not condescend to

receive. But though I reject your pity, I call upon your justice; and oh! Agnes, does its impartial voice acquit you? If it does, never more shall mine accuse you; but to my own presumption will I place what hitherto I have charged on your unkindness. On my quitting England, we mutually promised to correspond with each other, and the first two or three letters on each side were exactly what, parting on the terms we did, each had a right to expect from the other; but ever after, those on yours were characterized by a coldness, and finally by a cruelty, which the unvaried tenor of mine gave me but little reason to look for. Still, however, they did not irritate me to similar replies; I sighed over their heartlessness indeed; I lamented their brevity; I have been shocked at their injustice; but I exculpated myself from your accusations, as if I had deserved them; I soothed your reproaches as if I had merited them; I listened to your remonstrances as it

becomes man ever to listen to woman, and would have continued to do so, had you not put it out of my power by requesting, in one short line, to be no more troubled with my letters. Oh, Agnes ! never may your heart feel the pang which rent mine at that moment. It had not been from your hand that I expected such a blow ; it was not from your lips I ever expected to receive condemnation ; but I did receive it, and from that sad moment, life, time, eternity, all appeared to me one dreary blank—the star I had worshipped left me in darkness—the angel I had idolized rejected my adoration. Agnes, on whom I doted, lived for another ; and for what should her wretched De Meurville now exist ?—it would seem to record his woes. But no, he should exist to prove her power not so absolute ; that not on her alone depended all his happiness—for this he should, but I find myself unequal to the task ; and content if I convince you that I have not deserved my fate,

I unresistingly submit to its consequences. And now, farewell, Agnes!—farewell, Duchess of Westennera! We shall probably never meet again in this world; for, finding myself very ill, I purpose leaving your father's early to-morrow morning; but may we, my Agnes, in that happier one where sin and sorrow will be no more known, for ever, and from which we shall look back on the troubles of this, as at the dawn of the morning we do on the dream of the night.

Your's, &c.,

CLIFFORD DE MEURVILLE."

P. S. I enclose in this a foreign letter, which I see by the direction is for you, though it came under cover to me."

These letters De Meurville took an opportunity to give Agnes before dinner, when, from hoping he should have been able to appear at table, he ventured down to the drawing-room,

but finding himself unequal to it he again retired to his apartment. She was at first about to defer reading them, but irresistible curiosity led her not to do so, and taking them to her chamber, she sat down to peruse them. De Meurville's letter deeply affected her; and, at a loss to conceive who the other could be from, she was going to open it when the ringing of the dinner-bell obliged her to delay doing so; and with pale cheeks and starting tears she took her place beside the Duke of Westennera. During dinner she said not a word, and before the cloth was removed, requested permission to retire on the plea of head-ache. Lady Mandeville made no objection, never wishing the Duke to see her to disadvantage, and Agnes returned once more to her letters. The foreign epistle was dated from Vienna and signed Theodore. Unaware of having any friend, or even foe, of that name, Agnes in surprize hastened to read the following:—

Madam,

Dying by the hand of the perfidious woman in whose artifices I was an accomplice, and for whose sake I bartered my own conscience and marred your happiness, I think it but fair vengeance, if not expiatory virtue to inform you, that it is to her machinations you may attribute any thing which has appeared extraordinary in the conduct of the Count de Meurville; that she has detained letters of his to you, filled as I know with the most soul-subduing tenderness, and for which those sent to you, and addressed to herself, were most wretched substitutes. Take what means you please to discover this, and you will find it truth; as is also, that I was the person you met some time ago, wandering, apparently accidentally in your father's grounds, and who gave you information of which I was perfectly aware of the falsity. I was there by orders of the fiend, from whose craftily administered poison I am now expiring, and

whose hand and fortune was my promised reward ; but she basely broke her engagement, and bestowed them on another.

Now, Madam, abhor me, curse me, despise me, for I have probably lost you the most amiable of men ; one whom even the woman he hated, owned superior to the world ; but if I have not, pity, lament, and plead with your angel husband to forgive me. Tell him that when I sought to deprive him of the woman he worshipped, I inflicted on myself far greater pangs than it was possible I could on him ; they had every aggravation which a guilty conscience, a suspicious world, and an unfeeling mistress could bestow.

I am, &c. &c.

THEODORE."

What overpowering emotions did the perusal of this letter create in Agnes ! De Meurville, who suffering under the imputation of guilt

had been dear to her, released from it, was once more adored ; and to see him, to tell him, what she had just heard, and acquaint him with the impressions under which she had acted, was now her desire ; but still how she should have been so deceived, seemed an enigma, and Agnes ran to look for the letters by which she had been so. There was certainly nothing in them, on the most profound scrutiny, and that they had often received before, to create her surprize that she should have believed them addressed to herself: for, though they were cold, and latterly contemptuous, they were only what if she had become totally indifferent to him, and yet persecuted him with her letters, she might expect to receive ; the omission of her name in all of them, and that of any of her family, now certainly struck her as suspicious, and the handwriting of the direction, which was always on an envelope, betrayed on close examination such a slight difference from his, as to justify the

suspicion that it might be some one's else ; but still this did not argue that the letters were not intended for her; and altogether Agnes found it more difficult to believe they were not, than she had ever found it to persuade herself they were: love, however, induced the conviction which would render her most happy. And when she put every circumstance together—when she recollected the character of Annette, and how unreturned love might have produced hatred—when she considered the probability of her having quarrelled with her accomplice, and thus irritated him to a confession which he had no self-interest in revealing—and above all, when she recollected the dying looks of De Meurville, with the impressive language of his letter, and the melancholy tenderness of his manner on the evening they were out together!—when she thought over all this, doubt dissipated, suspicion flew, and De Meurville appeared once more the perfect idol he had been,

when first he received the homage of her young affections. But as a cloud will in a moment obscure a sunbeam, so did remembrance of the Duke of Westennera chill the joy of Agnes, and why she should rejoice at the Count's being restored to her affections, when another was destined for ever to possess herself, became the obtruding question of her conscience.

“For the credit of human nature,” replied her reason, but her heart whispered a very different tale, and for De Meurville, soliciting her love, imploring her hand, remembering the past but as enhancing the joys of the future, she felt she would that moment resign every thing; leave her parents to rage, her lover to wonder, her friends to despise, and make him alone happy who had acted no such selfish part as they had, but suffered for her more, ah, how much more! with whom while life was spared her, she could be equally happy in any place, in any

country ; in Germany, in America, in England, in exile !

But what availed all this, if De Meurville was never to know it ? and there now seemed no probability of her seeing him again to acquaint him with her sentiments, for his Swiss valet whom she had met going downstairs, confirmed the information given in his master's letter ; namely, that the latter was very ill, and would be leaving Hermitage next morning. Was this to be borne, was De Meurville to leave her, and for ever ! under the conviction that she had acted a part the most contemptible ? No ; sooner than he should, she would go to him that moment, show him the letters she had received, and then leave him to judge if she merited condemnation ; and if she did not, would he, her De Meurville, be the first to pronounce it, or she his Agnes, the first from him to receive it. Her heart told her not ; and encouraged by its dictates, she

approached the apartment of her lover ; and the door being partly open, ventured to knock, but no answer was returned, and she knocked again. Still there was no answer ; and thinking it most likely the Count was in an adjoining room, she ventured through to the opposite door ; upon entering which the first object that met her eyes, was De Meurville, extended on a sofa, and apparently sleeping. Over the apartment in which the blinds were down, was diffused a mellow light, and through the windows, which opened to the garden, came the delicious fragrance of fruits and flowers.

Agnes trembled, and stood as if on fairy ground ; upon one table lay a profusion of drawings done by the Count ; on another, his books and music. Turning lightly over the pictures, Agnes was struck by one, representing a beautiful girl playing with a child ; (the latter was evidently Adrian Balfour ;) so lovely that Agnes blushed to believe it could be meant for

herself, though the general outline of the features confirmed her in the idea that it was. And indeed among each of the groups, of which he had done several, was some figure evidently intended for hers ; and which, whether it was enveloped in the cloak of a beggar girl, or adorned in gayer attire, had a face so bewitchingly sweet, as to throw every other into the shade.

Agnes wept while she beheld these testimonies of her lover's affection, and going over to the sofa, contemplated for a moment those beautiful features, to which sleep communicated a glow of health they had long ceased to wear when waking.

“ De Meurville,” said she, softly, and thinking it better to awaken him, as, if they did not take advantage of that period for an interview, no other might offer—“ De Meurville,” she again repeated, and evidently in that light uncertain slumber which the slightest sound

could dissipation, he turned, he sighed ! and clasping the hand she had lightly laid on his, awoke. Either from not feeling, or from being too languid to express, De Meurville did not manifest that extreme surprize at the sight of Agnes which she had feared he would ; but starting up, and taking her hand, with a melancholy smile, he asked her if she were come to bid him farewell. Affected more by his looks and words than she had anticipated she would be, Agnes, unable to reply, turned aside and wept.

“ My Agnes ! ” said he, the sight of her tears evidently surprizing and distressing him, ‘ wherefore is it that you weep ? ”

“ Oh ! call me not your Agnes, ” said she. “ Call me not by a title to which I have lost all claim, and which it is now my misery to know the proudest I could have possessed. ”

“ It might have been the happiest, Agnes, ” returned he ; “ and if it had depended upon me it should ; but the one you are about to possess, is far prouder, and would consequently in the

eyes of mankind be generally deemed far happier also."

"How inadequate to bring it so!" exclaimed Agnes, with a sigh. But she continued, as soon as her tears would permit her, "You think, De Meurville, you are addressing that vain, weak creature, whom an idea of the world's admiration could induce to forget her affection, her vows, her religion, and, for the obtaining of a paltry title, seek alliance with age, vice, and infirmity, when, instead of that, you see before you a wretched heart-broken girl, who, in the hope of your love, for awhile alone lived, and who, in the conviction, or as she conceived it conviction of its falsity, nearly died; who, dragged by parental authority to the altar, sees in it only a readier passport to the grave."

"Ah! it has been as I foresaw," exclaimed the Count, with a sigh—"As I foretold to you, Agnes, it would, at our parting."

"No, it has not—it could not be, De Meur-

ville," interrupted she with emotion; "or if you still conceive it has, after reading this letter, after seeing these in confirmation of it, I was never worthy of the regard with which you once honoured me."

"That you were once worthy, Agnes," said he, taking the letters, "of all, and more than I now could offer you, nothing I could learn would make me doubt, but that you are still, it would be my delight as misery to know."

While De Meurville was reading these epistles, Agnes would have retired, but he gently detained her, and when he had finished that which explained the rest, caught her in his arms.

"Oh, unfortunate that I was!" said he, "to be entangled with that vile woman, to have been through her arts the means of destroying your happiness! Who could have conceived that the proposition I acceded to, to rid myself of her society, was invented to deprive me for ever of yours! Oh, Agnes! of what sorrow and

of what misery has she not been to me the cause."

"To both you and me," said Agnes, weeping.

"But tell me, tell me!" he continued wildly, "whether all or any thing I could now do would atone to you for the past?"

"All that a mortal could do for me, De Meurville, you have already done," said Agnes, "and that under the suspicion of my being the most worthless of human creatures, it now rather rests with me to ask in what manner I am to recompense you for all that you have suffered for my sake."

"By giving me yourself!—by giving me yourself!" exclaimed he, "for that question makes me too happy for me to refute, as I feel I ought its justice. Forget, my Agnes, every other tie, and upon this night, this very night, renounce them all for my sake."

"You ask," said she, faintly, "what you only could obtain, and what, even to you, I hesitate

to grant, from a conviction of the misery into which it would plunge my parents."

" Agnes !" said he, " if I were pleading for myself alone, I would not endeavour to seduce you from your duty ; but I am pleading for you ! and when I know the little happiness it is possible for you to enjoy with a man so dissimilar to yourself in age and dispositions as the Duke of Westennera, I feel that neither the disappointment which parental vanity may suffer, nor the desire his Grace may very probably entertain of having such an angel flitting about his gouty pillow, are motives sufficient to deter me from making to you the offer at least, of what you have not now to learn, the acceptance would make me most blessed."

Agnes replied not by words, but her eyes met those of De Meurville, and reading it would seem acceptance there, he ventured to call her his own. As soon as she began to speak, however, she adjured him to look at the letters which she had received as coming

from him ; and De Meurville, in compliance with her wishes, did so ; but they seemed rather to distract him, than to be in any way necessary as confirmations of the innocence of his Agnes ; and at length tearing them in a thousand pieces he flung them from him. “ So perish,” said he, “ all reminiscences of that wretched woman ; but not so summary shall be her punishment.”

“ Ah, De Meurville !” exclaimed Agnes, “ it may seem strange for me to be her intercessor, and with you ; but when I know what I myself endured, under the supposition of having lost your love, that she should have made any attempts, however unlawful, to obtain or to regain you, I own I scarcely wonder.”

“ If it had been love that prompted her conduct, Agnes, perhaps I should not either ; but it was not love, or any passion like it.”

“ Oh, yes ! you do not know yourself,” said she, “ or you would believe it ; and if she has not injured your health for ever, I conceive the punishment of having loved you and lost

you, sufficient for her—sufficient for the misery of any creature who once might have entertained hopes of possessing you.”

De Meurville smiled, and looked at Agnes : but of what exactly that look and smile implied, farther than a suspicion of his being dearer in her eyes than he was in those of others, none, perhaps, so well as she could tell.

“ You talk of my health, my Agnes !” however at length he said, “ as if you yourself enjoyed it, when that shadowy form, those pallid cheeks, those wasted arms which now entwine me, all tell so different a tale. Alas ! my love ! it was not once so.”

“ Nor will it be long,” said she, caressingly. “ These cheeks will be renovated with health, when it can be reflected from yours.”

While Agnes spoke, De Meurville drew from her bosom a picture of himself, which a similarity in the chain she always wore about her neck to the one he had given her with his miniature, had often led him to suspect she still

hung next her heart, and regarding it and her with pleased and gratified emotion, exclaimed, "To whom but the happy original of this image should fall the delightful task of restoring the health and happiness of Agnes?—not to the Duke of Westennera."

And as he spoke, their attention was arrested by the sound of voices in the garden, among others that of his Grace, who, apparently in high spirits, was talking and laughing alternately.

That intuitive delicacy, that native reserve, which powerful emotion may for a time suspend, but which an ensuing calm, or an awakening idea, always occasions to return with full force to the bosom of woman, again took possession of the heart of Agnes; and thinking she had already been guilty of an impropriety in remaining so long with De Meurville, she hastily arose, and, after making him promise to join them presently in the drawing-room, would have left him; but still he detained her; nor

did they part till each had settled the line of conduct they were to pursue. De Meurville determined that evening to seek an interview with Sir William, confess the sentiments he had long entertained for Agnes, and then implore him as a father solicitous for his daughter's happiness, to pursue that course which would most contribute to it, and dissolve all engagements with the Duke of Westenera. This plan, though neither De Meurville nor Agnes adopted it upon the supposition of Sir William's acceding to their wishes, for that they knew, without Lady Mandeville's concurrence, would be out of the question, each thought it would be more proper to pursue than otherwise ; and therefore it was finally agreed between them, that De Meurville should follow it, and, before either retired to rest, acquaint Agnes with the result of his interview with her father.

If it proved favourable,—but that was not to be imagined ;—if it proved unsuccessful, her lover implored her to make no hesitation in

being married to him in the Castle chapel, where he would have Mr. Lewson, her brother's curate, who was then stopping at the house ready waiting to unite them ; and then De Meurville would, according to his first intention, leave Hermitage early in the morning ; but instead of for London, for a town a few miles off, from which in the evening he would take a carriage and horses, and be ready waiting in a by-road near Hermitage, to convey her off from the latter.

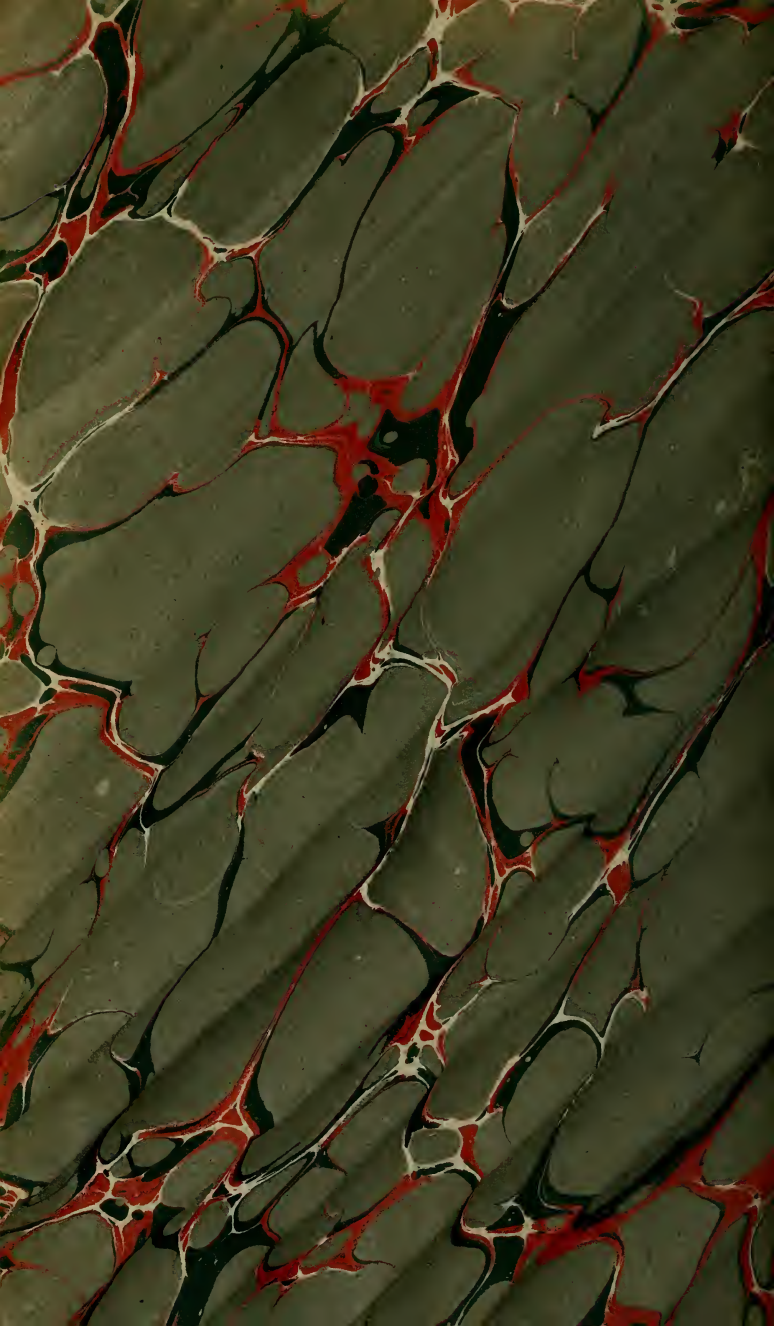
It was not without many sighs and tears that Agnes contemplated the fulfilment of this scheme ; for she was the best of daughters, as well as the most beloved of mistresses ; and though her mother had shown herself unkind in her conduct towards her, and that she could sacrifice her child's happiness for the gratification of her own ambitious views, and though her father had proved himself weak in making no opposition to his wife's manœuvres, she could not forget that they were still her pa-

rents ; and that neither her dislike of the Duke of Westennera, nor adoration of the Count de Meurville, altogether justified her leaving them in the manner she intended. But what was to be done, and which was most calculated to soften and overcome her resolution? De Meurville, pleading, imploring, hanging on her words, with health, spirits, peace, all gone, but as they might be restored by her love ; or her parents, to whom in misery she had prayed unpitied, to whom in tears she had appealed unheeded, to whom in frenzy she had knelt in vain.—Alas ! her heart said “ He,” but Nature whispered “ They.”

END OF VOLUME II.

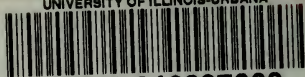
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